

## Online Chat Event

### Summary of Questions and Answers

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2008

This is a transcript of questions answered during the online chat event that happened for the distance learning courses in Livestock Health & Production and Veterinary Epidemiology & Public Health on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2008. Personal information about participants has been removed for data protection purposes

**Q1: If I want to study for the MSc in Veterinary Public Health and Epidemiology, what differences would there be with the full time taught course?**

A: With our MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health by distance learning, you can study the course material from the comfort of your own home, whereas with the full time course, you are tutor led and study is structured. For your information, the tutors are the same for both the taught-led and distance learning courses.

**Q2: I assume it is not a problem to move location (move to other country) during the course because its distance learning?**

A: You can study these courses anywhere in the world. Studying through the University of London External System is an ideal solution for anyone who is moving between countries but who also wants to continue their higher education.

**Q3: after finishing this course, can I apply for job in UK like a full time taught course student?**

A: If this is a question about visas I suggest that you consult:  
<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/>.

Many of the University of London External System alumni hold important roles across the globe. Not only do we have an excellent record of successful students but the University of London degree is awarded by Royal Charter and is recognised worldwide. More information on the University of London External System Alumni can be found on our website at this address:

<http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni/>

**Q4: Will I be able to attend the graduation ceremony at London University?**

A: The External System holds a presentation ceremony once a year at a venue in central London. Graduates and their guests come from all over the world to attend the ceremony, distance is no barrier! More information on the Graduation Ceremony can be found on our website at this address:

[http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni/graduation\\_photos/index.shtml](http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni/graduation_photos/index.shtml)

**Q5: How long is this course for?**

A: The MSc has a 5-year registration period and you would need to study and successfully pass exams in seven modules. There is also a Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in the

MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health. For your information, the modules of the MSc are also available as stand-alone 240-hour short courses.

**Q6: How easy is it for one to take all the courses in the MSc in one session?**

Answer: It wouldn't be possible in one session. The quickest you can do the full MSc is two years.

**Q7: Can I take all the core courses (of the MSc) in the first year?**

A: Yes.

**Q 8: What are the qualifications needed for admission to the Msc Public Health degree?**

A: The entrance requirements for the MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health are as follows: a) a second class honours degree or the equivalent in a scientific subject, veterinary science, animal science, agriculture, biological sciences or medicine; or (b) a second class honours degree in a scientific discipline which has, in the opinion of the University, included suitable training. All applicants must provide evidence of their English language ability. Applicants whose first language is not English must provide documentary evidence acceptable to the University that the applicant has, no more than three years prior to the application, either: - been educated in English (minimum 18 months) or - worked in English (minimum 18 months) or - passed a test of English Proficiency acceptable to the University of London – for example IELTS with an overall score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each sub-test or TOEFL score of 580 (or 237 in the computerised test) plus 4.5 in the Test of Written English (TWE)/Essay Rating.

**Q 9: Is it possible to transfer credits from previous postgraduate studies and/or an extensive professional experience in the fields of veterinary public health and epidemiology?**

A: Applications for credit transfers from students and graduates of the University of London will be considered on a discretionary basis. We do not offer any exemptions for these courses.

**Q 10: If I get admission to the next academic session and am not able to secure a scholarship can I defer it?**

A: An offer to study with the University of London is valid for two-years, in which case you would be able to defer awaiting your scholarship.

Short courses, 240-hour, 50-hour or 35-hour, are ideal if you're keen to update your professional knowledge, enhance your career, or sample the programme.

**Q11: Is it possible to switch between the study programs, i.e., certificate, diploma, and MSc?**

A: In order to be able to progress from the Postgraduate Certificate to the Postgraduate Diploma to the MSc degree, students must normally obtain a pass at the required level in each of the courses they have taken and receive a recommendation from the Examiners that they may proceed to the remaining courses of the respective course.

**Q12: Are the 240hrs short courses usually done within one year?**

A: Yes.

**Q13: How do the short courses in Animal Health Economics D006, D007 and D008 (Principles of farm animal economic analysis, tools for economic analysis, use of economic tools in epidemiology) differ from 500w (Tools for economic analysis in epidemiology)?**

A: From our web site, there is a short outline for each of our short courses:

[http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/prospective\\_students/shortcourses/royal\\_vet/35\\_hour/index.shtml](http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/prospective_students/shortcourses/royal_vet/35_hour/index.shtml)

For the 50 hour courses please see:

[http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/prospective\\_students/shortcourses/royal\\_vet/50\\_hour/index.shtml](http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/prospective_students/shortcourses/royal_vet/50_hour/index.shtml)

**Q14: Apologies if not appropriate but I represent a UK registered charity that would benefit greatly by having more courses structured around the understanding that not everyone who is involved in animal care is a registered vet so courses which are both for the layman and also the experienced animal carer would be appreciated**

A: We do run a number of 35-hour short courses in Animal Welfare where there are no entrance requirements required.

**Q15: If one does the short courses and later decides to do the full MSc, I presume these would not need to be done again if the MSc is started within a certain time period?**

A: That's more or less correct. If you're thinking about eventually going on to the MSc it is best to take one of the 240 hour short courses though as it will work out to be cheaper.

**Q16: Can RVC animal health economic courses be tied into UoL economics courses such as the Diploma for graduates in economics?**

A: You would be able to study for our stand-alone 240-hour short course in Epidemiology and Animal Health Economics, but unfortunately there are no links to the Diploma that you mention.

**Q17: Are scholarships available to students in certificate, diploma and MSc programs of study**

A: Previously, scholarships have only been available for the MSc programme; however, this may change for the future. Our web site will be updated as soon as further scholarships become available.

**Q18: Six Commonwealth Scholarships for MSc Epidemiology were offered to Developing countries in Africa where as 20 of such scholarships are available for similar programmes for students from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Is it fair?**

A: No it's not. However Commonwealth Scholarships are not offered by the University. They are offered by the Association of Commonwealth Universities, who are funded by various government agencies.

**Q19: I am a Bangladeshi, studying in England in present as an overseas student. I passed my DVM [doctor of veterinary medicine], am I eligible for a scholarship?**

A: I am sorry, but the deadline has now closed (1st July) for the receipt of scholarship applications for the MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health and Livestock Health and Production by distance learning. Should more scholarships become available next year, then I can assure you that our web site will be updated with this information.

**Q20: I am from Peru. Are there any scholarships for people from this part of the world?**

A: While no financial assistance is available from the University, many students receive financial support from their Local Education Authority or their own employers in both the public and private sector. It would certainly be worth asking your employer if they would consider offering such assistance. More information on funding your studies can be found on our website at this address: [http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/study\\_ep/funding/index.shtml](http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/study_ep/funding/index.shtml)

**Q21: How do the exams take place?**

A: Examinations are usually held world-wide at a number of centres in the UK and Eire and centres outside the UK and Eire (either through the local Ministry of Education or the British Council). More information about examinations can be found on our website at this address: [http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/current\\_students/general\\_resources/exams/index.shtml](http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/current_students/general_resources/exams/index.shtml)

**Q22: What's the best time of year to start a subject in order to have maximum time to study and exams?**

A: Our study year commences in February for the MSc/Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate programmes. As exams always take place in October, I would also recommend that you commence studying for our 240-hour short courses early in the year. However, as there is a revolving registration process, you may commence studying at any time throughout the academic year, but you would need to consider that study time would be reduced prior to the exams. There is a two-year registration period for the 240-hour short courses and you may decide to sit the exam in either year 1 or 2.

**Q23: Do I have to study at London University at any time during my studies?**

A: You do not have to study in London at any of the University campuses during your studies as the course has been designed for you to study independently. When you first register as an External student you will receive: - Student handbook, giving you information on planning your studies, preparing for examinations and study techniques. - Course pack for each course you study. This will contain a folder of directed learning notes, along with a series of readings. The readings will consist of copies of book chapters and articles which have been specially selected from leading academic journals and books. These will present the most concise and readable information and recent developments in the field. - Textbooks for certain courses. - Videos for certain courses. - Samples of past examination papers, and, where a course has previously been examined, an Examiner's report. - CD-ROMs (for certain courses). In subsequent years of your registration you will receive an updated Student handbook; the relevant course pack for any additional courses you begin studying; any sample/past examination papers and reports not previously received. The programme is designed so that you are provided with all the materials you need to study. The materials are comprehensive so you will be able to complete the courses without access to any additional books or readings. There

is, therefore, no need to purchase expensive textbooks, or to spend valuable time in trying to locate journals which may not be available locally.

**Q24: Is it possible for me to pay my tuition fees in instalments? Finance is my problem that I am from country that been in war for the last 21 years so how can go on with studies if you do not give scholarships? Where shall I be doing my Exams if at all I start with you and who supervises?**

A: Again, when you register for Postgraduate study in this area, you can either pay the total amount upfront or, if you would rather, you can pay as you go (a one-off registration fee plus a fee for each course). This makes paying for the qualification easier for students with budget constraints. For more information on where you can take exams in your country can be found on our website at this address: [http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/current\\_students/general\\_resources/exams/index.shtml](http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/current_students/general_resources/exams/index.shtml)

**Q25: Is the total fee for the Postgraduate Diploma going to be subject to additional charges yearly? And if it is so, does it apply to all scholars, no matter the fee they paid in past?**

A: When you register for these courses, you can either pay the total amount upfront or pay as you go (a one-off registration fee plus a fee for each course). The period of registration does not affect the price of these courses and the total costs are as follows: MSc (this incorporates a discount for payment in advance): £8,520 Postgraduate Diploma: £5,060 Postgraduate Certificate: £2,660. At the start of this course you will be provided with all necessary study materials. Besides the fees payable to the University, you should also budget for the fee levied by your local examination centre to cover their costs (if you do not sit your exams in London).

**Q26: I have a leaflet by me in which the fee for the Postgraduate Diploma is £4,900 sterling (for Livestock Health and Production). The fee is now 5,060.**

A: You are correct in that the fee for the Pg Diploma is now £5,060. Unfortunately, our fees are subject to an annual increment; however, they were not increased for last year.

**Q27: My intention is to pay each course in subsequent years.**

A: This is fine; when you register for Postgraduate study in these courses you can either pay the total amount upfront or pay as you go (a one-off registration fee plus a fee for each course). The period of registration does not affect the price of these courses.

**Q28: How many hours study are required per week to study one subject over a period of 8 or 9 months?**

A: It would be difficult to be precise about the number of study hours required, however, a rough guide would be, that between 10 and 15 hours would be recommended per week in order to study for one module of the MSc programme or one 240-hour short course.

Regarding time commitments, students registering for the MSc degree programmes have a minimum of two years and a maximum of five years in which to complete, whilst Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate students have a minimum of one year and a maximum of five. The 'study year' is effectively between February and September, with examinations in early/mid-October. Because individuals differ in the number of hours per week they need to devote to study, and in the number of years in which they would like to complete the programme, it is difficult to be

precise about the number of hours' study required. A rough guide, however, is that to complete in the minimum period you should be prepared for not less than 10 hours of study per week and 15 hours would be recommended. It is very important that the hours given to study, however many they may be, should be given consistently.

**Q29: Is animal food safety emphasized adequately in the MSc for Vet PH and Epi degree**

A: I believe our Veterinary Public Health module of the MSc would cover this topic. Our web site provides a brief outline of what is covered in the course at <http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/rvc> however; I would be pleased to e-mail you after this event with a full outline of the subjects covered.

**Q30: What about food security as a subject or topic which is important in developing societies?**

A: Currently, food security is not offered within either of our MSc programmes; however, plans are currently underway to develop a new short course in Sustainable Farming Systems. This will not be available until 2010 but is likely to form a module within our MSc in Livestock Health and Production.

**Q31: What does the Research project imply?**

A: The Research Project is an optional course of both our MSc programmes. The objective is to enable students to conduct a research project and prepare a scientific paper for publication.

**Q32: I have chosen to apply for the Postgraduate Diploma. Does this mean the research project doesn't concern me?**

A: That is quite correct; the Research Project is not relevant to the Postgraduate Diploma.

**Q33: I've just searched the site and there is no Animal disease part 2 available for PgD. It is included only in the structure of core courses for MSc?**

A: The Animal Disease, Part 2 course is to be replaced with the short course, Management of Infectious Viral Disease Outbreaks in Animal Populations. This will be available to both MSc and Postgraduate programmes.

**Q34: In order to enrich the study experience, one would need to establish a specific link between the theories instructed in the courses and his/her professional life. Therefore, is it possible to use applied and relevant research problems at work as case studies towards assignments given during the courses?**

A: All of the material which you require to study will be supplied as part of your course material, however, your assignments would definitely benefit from your personal experiences.

**Q35: Hopefully the topic of sustainable animal production and health systems will also be part of the vet public health and epi degree?**

A: Currently, it is very early in the development of this new course and it is foreseen to only form a module of the Livestock programme. By all means, I can feed back your interest.

**Q36: I wanted to ask about access e-journals during the studies.**

A: This is certainly a resource open to students of this course; if you would like access to any of these resources during your study you must contact the course administrator and they will provide you with all of the information needed to access them.

**Q37: Is there any practice we are supposed to do for Postgraduate Diploma (in a laboratory, farm or something similar) or only theory?**

A: There are no practicals involved with our studies.

However this obviously doesn't mean that the studies will be irrelevant to your work. Selene Huntley studied in the UK; she graduated with the MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health in December 2006. She said about the course, *"I really enjoyed the MSc and despite epidemiology being a challenging subject, the whole course was wide ranging in subject matter and I had a great sense of achievement in overcoming any obstacles. The fact that I was studying in this area enabled me to steer my career path in the right direction and now that I have my MSc, my job prospects have improved further still."*