

Programme Specification

Programme Summary Information				
1	Programme Title:		MSc Public Health Degree awards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSc Public Health • MSc Public Health (Health Inequalities) 	
2	University of Sunderland Course Code	PPBLCHEFT/ PPBLCHEPT	UCAS Code	CID722
3	Awarding Institution		University of Sunderland	
4	Teaching Institution(s) (if different from point 3)			
5	Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) (if applicable)			
6	For Apprenticeships:			
	Name of Apprenticeship Standard			
	Apprenticeship Standard Number			
	IfATE LARS Number			

7	Programme Description			
	<p>Overview</p> <p>The MSc in Public Health provides a comprehensive professional grounding in modern public health knowledge, skills and practice equipping graduates to work in research or applied public health roles in the UK or internationally. The programme is very much tailored to addressing the underlying complexity and the wider societal and environmental determinants of health and disease, which confront all health professionals concerned with better understanding and improving population health.</p> <p>What's covered in the course?</p> <p>Taught postgraduate programmes generally consist of a number of taught modules leading to the award of a Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits) or Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits). A Masters qualification (180 credits) usually culminates in a major piece of independent work such as a project or dissertation. All modules are at postgraduate level (level 7 in the UK's national scheme). The summary below describes briefly what is contained in the programme.</p> <p>The MSc programme is designed as a progressive three stage development starting with underlying research principles, sociological perspectives and an understanding of epidemiology which is the fundamental scientific discipline underpinning all of public health research and practice, including modern complex embedded patterns of chronic disease and their respective risk factors. From the outset (i.e. Certificate Level), the programme has a strong applied focus, with students prompted to consider their practical research topic of</p>			

interest at an early stage. There will be opportunities and encouragement also to explore topics which are active research areas of the department as well areas of collaboration with local / regional public health partners such as Local Authorities and Public Health England. The second stage of the programme (i.e. Diploma Level), deals with applied public health, making extensive use of case studies including field visits; the theory and practice of health improvement and its origins in traditional health promotion and thirdly international / global perspectives on research and practice in public health. As is common to most taught MSc programmes, the third stage (Masters) involves students undertaking their own research dissertations which ideally builds upon their identified areas of interest developed in the applied research methods module.

The programme is therefore designed across the following three main phases:

The first part, which equates to a Post-Graduate Certificate, is designed to give the students the underpinning skills of enquiry and appraisal to ensure an evidence base to their clinical practice. The emphasis on legal and ethical frameworks and philosophical approaches will address issues of critical thinking, analysis and evaluation. This will ensure students have the necessary skills to take full benefit of the analysis of their practice.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health aims to ensure that students are given an opportunity to examine wider the determinants of health at both individual and societal levels and to analyse them to a high degree with a view to facilitating health improvement and reducing health inequalities. This comprehensive grounding will enable them to identify and evaluate policies and interventions for population health improvement from local community settings through to national and international levels.

The project module in the MSc final year encourages independent thinking and reflective practice by embarking on a research project with an emphasis on examining solution(s) or responses to a practical public health problem(s) or issue(s). This will serve to consolidate learning over the programme enabling graduates to apply the knowledge and skills gained to tackling real world public health priorities and tailor their approach in accordance with their desired career direction (e.g. public health research, advocacy, policy or practice).

Teaching and learning will be delivered following the University's 'Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy'. A wide variety of approaches will be used e.g. lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, guided study and self-study.

Presentations and large / small group discussions will provide students with opportunities for exploration and practice both model skills and techniques taught which they will then apply in their clinical practice. Students will be expected to bring their experiences from clinical practice into classroom discussion and to apply the new knowledge and skills from each module in their work environment.

MSc Public Health (Health Inequalities) Route

The MSc Public Health (Health Inequalities) route builds on the core MSc Public Health curriculum with a distinct emphasis on understanding and addressing health inequalities. Students will examine how social, economic, environmental and structural determinants, shaped by both national policy and global forces, contribute to unequal health outcomes across different population groups, with particular attention to the UK context.

The route places greater focus on equity, social justice and intersectionality, alongside critical engagement with global influences such as economic systems, migration, commercial determinants of health and international policy agendas, and how these interact with local and national public health practice. Students are supported to use data and evidence to identify,

monitor and evaluate inequalities, and to critically assess public health policies and interventions in terms of their differential and distributional impacts.

Where will I study?

The MSc Public Health is delivered at the University of Sunderland London Campus, while the MSc Public Health (Health Inequalities) route is delivered at the University of Sunderland Sunderland Campus.

The MSc Public Health (Health Inequalities) is available through full-time and part-time on-campus study at Sunderland.

The MSc Public Health is available through full-time and part-time on-campus study at the London Campus.

Does the programme have an associated IFY?

No

Learning and Teaching Strategy

The curriculum is designed to meet the requirements for post-graduate qualifications as stipulated by the QAA for Higher Education. The programme has been designed to take account of the increasingly broad societal focus of public health in particular and the structural, political and organizational strategies which have been adopted in the UK and internationally to identify and characterise modern health and health-care challenges and better respond to them.

To meet these challenges there are three strands, each one emphasising a different aspect of change and development in the role of the practitioner. Common to all areas is knowledge, ways in which knowledge is constructed and applied and methods of inquiry. These issues will be addressed in the first part of the programme, which will equip the practitioner to develop their skills and knowledge and will enable them to focus on their chosen branch.

At this level (post-graduate) students are expected to be self-directed, and the underpinning philosophy of the curriculum is empowerment of the student. A wide variety of strategies are used in the delivery of the curriculum. Common to all modules is the relationship of the theory to practice, which is addressed in a variety of ways. There will be formal input of information for students are expected to apply and discuss this knowledge in the session. Assignments are designed to relate theory to practice in a clear and focused manner.

The curriculum employs a variety of teaching methods to allow students to gather the requisite knowledge base as well as the many subject specific and generic skills required of a graduate of the course. There will be formal input of information for student s which will supplement group work, which encourages students to investigate and apply the knowledge gained in these lectures. These classes include the presentation of theory and opportunities are given to the students to discuss and explore issues in detail and to reflect on its application to practice.

How will I be taught?

Scheduled teaching activities	Yes
Independent study	Yes
Placement	No

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All teaching within the course is focussed in terms of the application of the knowledge gained in practice. The curriculum is designed to ensure that graduates are able to combine a solid knowledge of the evidence base with enhanced practical skills, an ability to think laterally and to express sound clinical reasoning to respond to the many challenges facing the modern clinician and in meeting the current health agenda. Students are further prepared for professional practice through a development of an awareness of legislative issues.

Additional support will be given within tutorials, if and when required.

Lectures or equivalent: formal lectures are delivered by the teaching team. Further direct staff contact is provided through support for CAL or open learning units, etc., examination sessions and scheduled supervision of projects. Visiting lecturers in specialised areas deliver keynote lectures allowing them to share valuable, current experience with the students. Handouts covering key points are also provided or (it is planned) accessed through WebCT. The students are expected to augment these both in lectures and using directed learning.

Seminars / Workshops: seminars and workshops are strongly integrated into the programme to illustrate and expand theoretical principals, encourage teamwork, and develop peer and self-assessment.

Tutorials: these will usually be in smaller groups and provide a major input from internal or external staff but may not involve the same level of student output as workshops.

Directed self-study: students make use of many modes of study in the various specified learning activities summarised in the module descriptors, including self-directed study of presented material, working through set examples, preparation for workshop presentations, prescribed reading or other media work directly related to taught material and project work. Where open-learning or similar student-centred schemes are used; these are presented in association with keynote lectures.

Advised self-study: reference to additional sources of information will be given to enable students to read around the module topic to provide opportunities for a broadening of knowledge.

The integration of knowledge whenever appropriate, through integrative assignments, and development of a deep understanding of the principles and practice of health and bio psychosocial models will be encouraged.

For each module, students will receive a module guide. Further information about the modules that make up the wider programme is included within this integrated programme guide. The module guide will detail the contact details of the module leader, syllabus, unit(s) titles, and assessment strategy of the module. Each module guide will consist of a carefully structured study plan to ensure that students cover the appropriate materials. Basic information will be

provided in the module, and students will be informed as to appropriate sources of additional material as required.

Independent work is also expected throughout the programme culminating in the final year with an extensive study in a particular chosen area. Each student will be designated their own research supervisor and is expected to demonstrate reflective, data gathering and analysis skills, while discussing results and their relevance to past and present studies.

Presentation of work is delivered using a variety of methods to allow the students to illustrate their ability to interpret and communicate data. This includes formal write up of case studies, verbal presentations, role play/simulation.

Students are given directed learning and are signposted to specific websites, journals and books to encourage continuing professional development and maintenance of their personal development files. They are expected to read widely, highlighting the importance of life-long learning.

Assessment:

Assessment on the programme is mainly through a combination of end of term written assignments and mid-term presentations or in class exercises, and a written multiple-choice exam. The mid-term assessments allow students to gain an early appreciation of the level of understanding required in each respective module and effectively serve as an early indicator of progress and successful engagement with the programme. Presentations are also an effective means of developing communication skills and assessing if students are able to “think on their feet” and defend their ideas – key skill areas for a developing public health professional. Written assignments of course, assess the ability to logically structure your work and write coherently on an application of the module knowledge and principles, usually focusing on a problem area or topic of your own interest that is relevant to the syllabus. The dissertation assesses your capacity to propose, design and execute your own original research project. For those without a clear idea of what they would like to study for their dissertation, topic areas will be circulated that fit with currently active research areas within the public health team.

General Principles

The University has a ‘duty of care’ to ensure that all graduates are fit for practice. In essence, this requires that all graduates meet a set of minimum threshold standards of competence in the taught skills. Thus, the programme aims to build on core knowledge, cognitions and skills, introducing ideas and interventions, assessment approaches and instruments, which have been demonstrated through research to have been effective, and to consider these in the context of teamwork and service configurations and acceptability to service users and carers.

The award of the certificate, diploma and MSc degree requires that all modules are passed. The programme team have therefore developed a set of programme specific regulations that will promote the higher standard of achievement. This is not beyond the reach of our students, who generally have higher entry skills and experience than the majority of students on other programmes, and will support the University’s desire to enable students to reach their full potential. As integration of learning is especially important for the students, reflecting this key ability in professional practice, all students will be required to pass all modules at each level before progressing to the next level.

The diversity of cultures represented within student cohorts represents a significant opportunity for peer group learning beyond the context of an academic curriculum and students from across the programme are encouraged to share their life and educational experiences as a means of enriching the overall student experience.

	The University VLE will be used as a mechanism of centrally storing lecture and seminar briefs and core documentation from the programme and regular announcements will be posted for students on the programme.
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8	Programme Awards		
8a	Name of Final Award	Level	Credits Awarded
	MSc in Public Health	7	180
	MSc in Public Health (Health Inequalities)	7	180
8b	Exit Awards and Credit Awarded		
	Postgraduate Certificate	7	60
	Postgraduate Diploma	5	120
	Masters Degree	6	180

9	Programme Specific Regulations
	Yes

10a			
	Mode(s) of Study	Location/Campus	Duration of Study
	Full time	Sunderland/London	1 year
	Part time	Sunderland/London	2-3 years

10b		
	Is this programme delivered at a Transnational (TNE) partner ?	No
	Is this programme delivered at UK Partner Institutions ?	No

11	Entry Requirements
	The admission requirements for this programme as stated on the course page of the University of Sunderland website at https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/ , or found by searching for the course entry profile located on the UCAS website are correct. YES
	This programme is suitable for students to enter with advanced standing (e.g. APL) YES
	Where applicable use the space below to detail any specific arrangements – e.g. APL only permitted to a specific level Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

12	Programme Learning Outcomes
	By the end of the programme successful students will be able to do the following:
1	To be able to interpret and explain the significance of patterns of ill health in populations and the methods used to study them.
2	Have a broad appreciation of the determinants of health and disease in populations and of recent developments in the public health response at local, national and international levels.
3	To be able to critically evaluate published (public health) research and provide informed and meaningful analysis of public health programmes and policies.
4	To have acquired a sound grasp of the theories and principles, as well as the historical development of modern public health practice and study methodologies.

5	To be able to understand and apply appropriate research and analytical skills to addressing the modern complex public health problems of developed and developing societies.
6	To be able to critically evaluate published public health research at a level commensurate with professional peer review practice.
7	Have acquired a strong foundation in the principles and underlying component disciplines of modern public health practice including the social and environmental determinants of health and disease in populations and communities.
8	A practical applied knowledge and appreciation of the application of public health methods, from health care public health to international disease control and prevention programmes.

13. Programme Requirements

There are optional modules on this programme No

Level 7

MSc Public Health – London Campus

In order to complete this programme, a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 180 credits):

Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	PLO(s) assessed
HSSM66	Health Research Methods & Critical Appraisal	30	2, 3, 4, 6
HSSM72	Social Determinants of Global Health and Health Systems	30	3, 4, 5, 6
HSSM67	Epidemiology & Health Measurement	30	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
HSSM68	Applied Public Health Practice	30	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
HSSM70	Dissertation	60	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

MSc Public Health (Health Inequalities) – Sunderland Campus

In order to complete this programme, a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 180 credits):

Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	PLO(s) assessed
PHPM001	Research Methods in Social and Health Inequalities	30	2, 3, 4, 6
PHPM005	Theories and Models of Behaviour Change	30	3, 4, 5, 6
PHPM002	Health and Disease Patterns: Data Analysis and Interpretation	30	1, 2, 3, 5, 6
PHPM003	Applied Social and Health Inequalities	30	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
PHPM004	Dissertation Project	60	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

14. Employability

The programme contributes to the development of the following graduate attributes. Please refer to [Integrated Curriculum Design Framework](#) when completing this section.

Professional	Graduates develop advanced analytical, research and communication skills that support professional practice in public health research, policy, evaluation and analytical roles. Through critical engagement with data, research evidence, theory and policy, students build capability in problem analysis, ethical judgement, project planning and the production of clear, structured outputs for academic, professional and policy audiences. The programme is informed by contemporary UK public health competency frameworks and reflects the knowledge, skills and professional behaviours expected in public health employment settings. The independent research project further supports professional development through sustained autonomous working, time management, accountability and the delivery of a substantial piece of applied public health research.
Adaptable	The programme equips graduates with transferable skills that support adaptability across diverse and evolving employment contexts. Students develop the ability to interpret complex information, critically appraise competing forms of evidence, apply theoretical frameworks flexibly, and respond to emerging public health and social challenges. Engagement with real-world datasets, policy documents and applied case studies supports the transfer of learning across sectors, enabling graduates to pursue career pathways in research, policy analysis, consultancy, third-sector organisations, local and national public health settings, and further academic study.
Engaged	Graduates develop a strong awareness of social justice, equity and ethical responsibility in relation to public health practice. The programme encourages critical engagement with contemporary social challenges, population health inequalities, public policy and system-level decision-making, supporting students to understand the wider societal implications of research and analysis. Through engagement with UK and international public health contexts, graduates are equipped to contribute thoughtfully and responsibly to professional discussions, policy debates and collaborative efforts aimed at improving population health and reducing health inequalities.

15. Additional Costs: Are there any additional costs on top of the fees?

List any additional costs the students will have to meet and whether this is optional (e.g. an optional field trip) or essential (e.g. buying a lab coat). Give an estimation of the approximate cost which may be a range. This information should be replicated in the Module Guide and will be published on the course page.

No, but all students buy some study materials such as books and provide their own basic study materials	X
Yes (optional). All students buy some study materials such as books and provide their own basic study materials. In addition, there are some additional costs for optional activities associated with the programme (see above)	
Yes (essential). All students buy some study materials such as books and provide their own basic study materials. In addition, there are some essential additional costs associated with the programme (see above)	

16. Version Control

Programme Specifications are checked annually and updated when changes are made to the programme.

Version Number		Date	Details of change	Author
V1	Document created	05/17	New Programme Created	T. Platt.
V2	Document Updated	06/23	Updates with module modifications	L Harvey-Golding
V3	Document changes	01/26	New route added and moved to new template	L Harvey-Golding

Version number:	5	Template owner:	Quality Team
Date reviewed:	Jun-24	Date of next review:	Jun-29