

# PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

## MSc Public Health

**This document applies to students who commence the programme in or after September 2017**

1.	<b>Awarding Institution / Body</b>	University of Worcester
2.	<b>Teaching Institution</b>	University of Worcester
3.	<b>Programme accredited by</b>	N/A
4.	<b>Final award</b>	PG Cert, PG Diploma, MSc
5.	<b>Programme Title</b>	Public Health
6.	<b>Pathways Available</b>	N/A
7.	<b>Mode and / or site of delivery</b>	A one year full time course using the standard delivery of taught sessions over two semesters at the University of Worcester. Delivery is across 12 weeks of each semester and typically includes weekly afternoon and evening taught sessions, to allow students to travel and to facilitate attendance of working part time students.
8.	<b>Mode of Attendance</b>	Full time and part time.
9.	<b>UCAS Code</b>	N/A
10.	<b>Subject Benchmark Statement and / or Professional Body Statement</b>	The course content is aligned with the guidelines for accreditation at the International level (W.H.O) European level (The European Agency for Accreditation in Public Health Education, APHEA) and the National level (The Faculty of Public Health and the UK Public Health Register) with a view to accreditation in the future.
11.	<b>Date of Programme Specification preparation / revision</b>	March 2014 August and October 2014 (Regulations) Updated February 2015 August 2016 (Regulations amended - Section 20) Removal of optional module MSPH4008 January 2017, with effect from 2017/18. August 2017 AQU amendments and updates

## 12. Educational Aims of the Programme

In modern times public health interventions have consistently made major contributions to social progress, yet at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century familiar public health problems still persist and new challenges are emerging. Poverty and inequity remain significant factors that contribute to or exacerbate a range of health problems in the vast majority of countries; and while medical science and technology continue to make major strides in the treatment of many diseases, preventable morbidity and premature deaths are increasingly seen to be the result of lifestyles and social conditions. The many facets of globalisation (e.g. the influence of multi-national companies on nutrition, the relocation of polluting industries from developed to developing countries and the health problems associated with climate change) pose significant challenges to national governments and international public health agencies and alliances. Public health has a history of developing its practice to respond to new challenges, from the sanitary-environmental infrastructure success in the United Kingdom during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (such as the building of sewerage systems to combat infectious diseases) to the more recent advances in medical science and technology (such as vaccination and medical screening techniques). These advances have required public health practitioners to combine a breadth of different types of knowledge with a vision of what needs to be changed and how to bring those changes about. This course builds from an analysis of previous and on-going successes in public health

and their associated theory and practice, while also looking forward to the visionary models and practices required for meeting emerging and future public health challenges.

The course takes a progressive approach by integrating the natural and social science contributions to public health, by recognising the current transitions taking place in global and national populations and by working from models that respond to the complexity of these health transitions (characterised by Rayner and Lang, 2012, as Demographic, Epidemiological, Urban, Energy, Economic, Nutrition, Biological, Cultural and Democracy). Non-infectious diseases have complex causes that go beyond identifying and treating changes at the individual physical level, for example obesity is as much an outcome of social forces (many of which are a reflection of globalisation) as it is an outcome of individual 'choices' (see the Foresight's 2007 'Full obesity system map' to gain an insight in to the complexity of a problem that is often characterised as a matter of individual choice and behaviour). The level of complexity which characterises many of the emerging challenges for public health in the next century require innovative approaches that use new theoretical models to inform professional practice. The masters in public health at Worcester University therefore incorporates innovative and progressive models, such as the ecological approach to public health, in order to complement and enhance the successes of existing approaches to public health practice, and equip students with the vision and skills to meet the challenges of the future.

Public Health requires an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of health problems and the professional practice needed to address them, and meeting the new complex health problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century requires integration of thinking and practice across many disciplines. Climate Change for example, has implications for food security, exposure to extremes of heat and flooding and a loss of the biodiversity needed to secure many ecosystem services essential for health. Meeting these health challenges therefore requires an understanding of the functioning and health of ecosystems, and this extends existing public health knowledge and practice in to new areas of understanding and interdisciplinary practice. Public Health at the University of Worcester is therefore an exciting progressive course that is relevant to both the 'traditional' public health workforce and a wide range of 'allied' professionals seeking to enhance their ability to impact on the public's health. The course is structured so that applicants from diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to gain a sound foundational knowledge base in contemporary public health practice that is of equal relevance to progressing a career in the NHS, internationally, in private health care organisations, in allied health sciences, or in third sector organisations. Having established this foundational knowledge, students can select option modules in order to maintain a broad based approach to public health, or choose options in a way that enables them to pursue more focussed interests in UK practice, international public health or health and sustainability.

**The programme aims to provide:**

- an environment in which students gain the confidence to feel they can shape future public health provision and delivery by challenging and enhancing current practice and approaches.
- a flexible, multidisciplinary, student centred route to postgraduate achievement.
- a stimulating environment based on the values of academic freedom, ethical awareness and critical appraisal.
- intellectual challenge through the promotion of critical analysis, evaluation and problem solving.
- modules which develop critical reflection, originality, critique and synthesis to inform evidence based practice.
- the opportunity for the student to challenge their own values and attitudes and develop new ways of thinking in a supportive environment.
- a critical appreciation of the varying perspectives and values of public health and health and social care professionals, stake holders, service users, and cultures.

- an opportunity for practitioners to develop autonomy, self-management, leadership skills, decision making skills, collaboration skills, high level communication and dissemination skills and practice competence in a supportive environment.
- an opportunity to design and conduct, with support, a substantive, independent, research project with the potential to innovate new practices and influence change
- increased opportunities for career advancement.

### **13. Intended Learning Outcomes and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods**

#### **Subject Specific Learning Outcomes**

The subject specific learning outcomes are achievable throughout the modules.

On successful completion of the PG Cert or PG Dip, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to locate and analyse public health issues in relation to wider social, political and environmental forces and processes.
2. Formulate, implement and evaluate public health policy and strategies at population and community levels.
3. Show understanding of the complexity of diverse public health challenges and capability in exercising judgement in the management of conflicting interests and agendas.
4. Demonstrate competence in the interpretation and evaluation of evidence and the application of appropriate public health methods to research and health interventions.
5. Apply knowledge and skills to the wide range of topics related to global public health problems.
6. Critically interpret and evaluate the significance of environment to public health and design strategies and interventions that are aligned to sustainability and environmental improvement.
7. Demonstrate reflexivity and competence in public health management, including the ability to critically evaluate the ethical and quality issues arising from policies and interventions
8. Communicate complex ideas verbally and in writing, with a high level of fluency and scholarly expertise.

To complete the MSc, students will need to:

9. Independently design and conduct an original research project using theory and techniques from public health.

#### **Generic and Transferable Learning Outcomes:**

On successful completion of the PG Cert, PG Dip or MSc, students will also be able to:

1. Demonstrate a high level of critical appraisal, self-reflection, competence and judgement in retrieving, evaluating and communicating information.
2. Work collaboratively, with professionalism, self-awareness and compassion towards group goals.
3. Work independently, making decisions in complex situations, with self-direction and self-management.

Where the emphasis on some outcomes is greater in some modules, this is identified in the learning outcome table in the MSc Public Health Handbook. Similarly the assessments are designed to assess a breadth of knowledge, cognitive, practical and transferable skills. The transferable skills likewise are embedded in each module.

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

- The aim throughout the programme is to use lectures as a platform for discussion, critical thinking, analysis of cases and policies and to encourage students to apply these activities to relevant examples from the public health, health and social care sectors.
- The course aims to engage students in the attainment of a holistic overview of public health, using critical thinking to draw both from more traditional models and approaches as well as current progressive models of public health theory and practice.
- All modules emphasise self-directed autonomous learning with students applying learning outcomes and content to both generic public health issues and to their own focus for their future public health practice (e.g. for international students the country they will practice in, for U.K. students the professional context of their target future employment).
- The programme includes a large degree of group discussion and debate as a key feature of the programme and this reflects the collaborative nature of public health analysis and decision making
- Tutorials are a key aspect of the learning strategy with student being encouraged to share their assessment plans with tutors and peers. MSPH4001, MSAP4006 and MSPH 4007 include sessions where students share their assessment plan in groups with peers and receive structured questions and feedback.
- Each module is linked to its own VLE on Blackboard.

#### **14. Assessment Strategy**

The assessment strategy is designed to develop skills and knowledge in public health and provide evidence of the students' progress and achievement throughout the course and prepare the students for a career in public health. The course uses the accreditation guidelines of the World Health Organisation (W.H.O), The European Agency for Accreditation in Public Health Education (APHEA), The Faculty of Public Health and the UK Public Health Register to provide a framework for module content and the knowledge and skills to be assessed. In order to develop the skills of advanced study in public health as stated in the course the students will experience a variety of assessment strategies. Both formal (summative) and informal, developmental, (formative) approaches will be used. Summative assessments include case studies, essays, report writing, critical reflection and presentations (individual and group). Essays, reports and examinations are used to assess specific skills. Multifaceted case studies that integrate topic areas are used to enable students to develop critical thinking and innovation. The larger items of work will require students to integrate the knowledge and skills covered and use research skills to locate and critically evaluate information. Formative assessments include essay planning, comparative case study reviews, preparation of briefings and presentations and student lead seminars. Formative assessments are based on on-going feedback over a number of weeks, either on a one to one tutorial basis, during group work and using electronic means such as e-mail and via the Blackboard feedback resources set up for each module by the module team. The opportunity for students to demonstrate independence in a sustained piece of work is provided in the undertaking and completion of the dissertation.

The programme uses Masters level descriptors for assessment of assignments which are aligned to the University's Masters Level Assessment Criteria.

## 15. Programme structures and requirements

### MSc Public Health (180 credits)

Level 7	Module	Credits	Status	Prereq
MSPH4001	Introduction to Public Health	20	M	None
MSPH4002	Health Education and Promotion	20	M	None
MSPH4003	Health Policy, Economics and Management	20	M	None
MSPH4004	Methods in Public Health	20	M	None
MSPH4005	Global Health	20	O	None
MSPH4006	Community Focussed Health Improvement in the United Kingdom	20	O	None
MSPH4007	Climate Change, Sustainability and Public Health	20	O	None
*MSAP4080	Negotiated Learning	20	O	None
MSPH4010	Advanced Independent Study / Dissertation	60	M	MSPH4004

In addition to the option modules listed above for the MSc Public Health students also have the option to choose any available Masters level module, with guidance from the Course Leader on the relevance of selected options (e.g. to support an area of special interest relevant to public health practice or to support the student's dissertation subject area).

\* In any given year the availability of option modules will depend on student numbers and in the event of an option module not being able to run due to a low number of students registering for that module, students will in these circumstances be able to choose the negotiated learning module as an alternative.

On successful completion of 6 taught modules (including the mandatory modules MPHS4001, MPHS4002, MPHS4003 and MSPH4004) plus the 60 credit Advanced Independent Study/Dissertation module, students will be awarded the MSc Public Health.

In the event that a student is unable to complete the 180 credits required for the masters award the exit awards of Post Graduate Diploma in Public Health and Postgraduate Certificate in Public Health are available as follows:

On successful completion of 6 taught modules, students will be awarded the Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health (depending on entry qualifications). Students are required to have successfully completed the 3 mandatory modules MPHS4001, MPHS4002, MPHS4003 (as the team feels that these are necessary for a foundational level of public health) and any three option modules listed for the course.

On successful completion of 3 taught modules, students will be awarded the Postgraduate Certificate in Public Health (depending on entry qualifications). Students are required to have successfully completed the 3 mandatory modules MPHS4001, MPHS4002, MPHS4003 (as the team feels that these are necessary for a foundational level of public health).

Students studying full time will complete the programme in 12 months of study, taking mandatory and option modules in the first two semesters of study and completing the dissertation in the third semester of the course. Students studying part time may take up to 2 years to complete the programme.

## 16. QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

This award is located at level 7 of the FHEQ. The following sources have been used throughout the programme:

- The Faculty of Public Health professional standards (2013)
- Reference has been made to the QAA Scotland subject Benchmark 'Specialist community public health nursing' (2009) to inform relevant areas of the course.
- QAA - [Masters Degree Characteristics](#)
- Both core mandatory modules and option modules are aligned with the guidelines for accreditation at the International level (W.H.O) European level (The European Agency for Accreditation in Public Health Education, APHEA) and the National level (The Faculty of Public Health and the UK Public Health Register) to ensure quality standards and with a view to a future accreditation of the programme.

## 17. Support for students

A full range of pastoral and academic support services are available for students which can be accessed via the [Student Homepage](#).

Specific to the programme:

- A Course Handbook is provided to all students and is updated annually. Further subject leaflets and guides, most of which are available on the web, will be provided to students.
- An induction programme is provided for all new entrants.
- The subject team provide study skills and additional support can be provided by learning support services (Library, IT, and Media and Print).
- There is extensive programme information on Webpages, in module flyers, and in the programme handbook.
- Module leaders and personal academic tutors provide aim to provide exceptional level of individual academic support and encouragement to students.
- Prior to commencing the course, students are invited to attend an induction day that will familiarise them with the University, the Institute of Health and Society (IHS) and the course. They can meet representatives from Student Services, Registry, Information & Communication Technology (ICT) and Library Services and hear more about their services as well as meeting the programme team.
- All students are allocated a Personal Academic Tutor for the duration of the course.
- Each module has a module outline and webpages linked to the module.
- Most modules have a visit from the Subject Librarian for the course on the first day.
- All dissertation students have a supervisor allocated from first contact and throughout the proposal writing and dissertation process.
- All module leaders provide individual academic support through module assessment specific tutorials in addition to personal tutor support.

Further information on the University of Worcester support for students is available from Student Services and the Disability and Dyslexia Service:

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/index.htm>

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/disability-and-dyslexia.htm>

## 18. Admissions Policy

### Entry requirements

Applicants should normally have:

### **EITHER**

- A lower second class Honours degree (2:2) in a relevant subject from a UK university, the CNAAB or an overseas equivalent.

### **OR**

- Qualifications and experience considered to be equivalent to the above. All students applying via this route will be assessed and where necessary interviewed by the Programme Leader.

International students will be expected to demonstrate their proficiency in English and would normally be expected to have an IELTS score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each element, or equivalent. Students can check their qualification with the International Recruitment Team at: [international@worc.ac.uk](mailto:international@worc.ac.uk)

When assessing a non-standard entrant's suitability for entry onto the programme candidates will need to demonstrate their potential to achieve the aims and outcomes of the programme. The candidate will also need to demonstrate that their experiences are equivalent to having achieved a 2.2 at undergraduate level. The following criteria may be taken in to consideration:

- Level of current qualifications
- Experience of working in a public health setting, the roles undertaken and the level of decision making undertaken
- Ability to write in a clear, coherent and critical manner
- Motivation for undertaking the programme
- Support from employer to undertake programme

An interview with the candidate may be undertaken and a reference from an employer that details the applicant's experiences and current (or previous) role(s) will be required. The applicant may also be asked to undertake a critical written report for consideration.

- UK students being sponsored by their employer must provide evidence of employer approval and payment agreement.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning**

Students with relevant previous study at postgraduate level or with extensive experience may be considered eligible for recognition of prior learning. Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance on 01905 855111.

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm>

### **Admissions Procedures**

All applications will be via the Admissions office and seen by the programme leader.

Students will be invited for interview with the programme leader and another member of the team in the following circumstances:

- when they do not have a good honours degree,
- where the student requests,
- when the module choice is unclear,

- where there is a need to discuss the recognition of prior learning (RPEL)
- In the case of International students interviews may be conducted by phone or video conference/Skype.
- Applicants who do not meet the entry criteria may be required to undertake a piece of work to ascertain if the programme will be appropriate for them. Full support is given to help students without degrees to access the programme.

### **Admissions/Selection Criteria**

Students are offered a place when the programme leader confirms that that the applicant meets the entry criteria.

## **19. Methods for Evaluating and Improving the Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning**

- Students evaluate modules at the midpoint and end of each module. Collated evaluations are placed online with the module leaders' response and action plan and uploaded onto Blackboard. Evaluations are reviewed by the programme leader and in programme management committees by the whole team. The collated student evaluations are made available to the education leads at the local NHS Trusts in respect of sponsored students.
- Annual Evaluation Reports
- External Examiner Reports
- Peer learning through observation.
- Course Management Committee
- Post exam board moderation
- The staff appraisals of members of the programme team inform scholarly activities such as research, publication and conference presentations.
- Overall programme evaluation takes place via classroom evaluations and the Community Website on Blackboard.

## **20. Regulation of Assessment**

### **The course operates under the University's Taught Courses Regulatory Framework**

#### **Requirements to pass modules**

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Some modules have attendance requirements.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

#### **Submission of assessment items**

- Students who submit course work late but within 5 days of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 5 days but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.

- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

#### Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- A student who fails 60 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.

#### Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
Post Graduate Certificate Public Health	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at Level 7 MPHS4001, MPHS4002, MPHS4003
Post Graduate Diploma Public Health	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 7 MPHS4001, MPHS4002, MPHS4003 plus 3 further modules from the Award Map
Masters in Public Health	Passed a minimum of 180 credits at Level 7 MPHS4001, MPHS4002, MPHS4003, MPHS 4004 plus 2 further modules from the Award Map and 60 credits for MPHS4010 Advanced Independent Study / Dissertation

PG Cert and PG Dip awards are unclassified. The awards of Masters may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

## 21. Indicators of Quality and Standards

The University underwent a QAA Institutional Audit in March 2011. The audit confirmed that confidence can be placed in the soundness of the institution's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the learning opportunities available to students. The audit team highlighted several aspects of good practice, including the student academic representative (StARs) initiative, the proactive approach which supports the student experience for disabled students, the comprehensiveness of the student online environment (SOLE), the wide range of opportunities afforded to students to enhance their employability, the institution's commitment to enhancement, and the inclusive approach to working with its collaborative partners.

The MSc Public Health sits amongst a number of professionally accredited courses in both health and social care at both undergraduate and post graduate level; including the recently approved BSc Physiotherapy and BSc Occupational Therapy. Both of the courses are registered with the HCPC and their respective Societies.

## 22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

- The links between the University and local, regional, national and international public health providers will in the first instance ensure that Postgraduates are prepared for the workplace in terms of gaining the relevant skill set. The Institute of Health and Society has long established links with service providers locally, nationally and internationally to whom the course can be marketed and who are potential future employers.

- Organisations and practitioners in the sector engaged with the design and development of the programme include local and regional primary care organisations (Worcester, Worcestershire and West Midlands), international health and development organisations (in development), and third sector organisations such as Community First. Representatives of these organisations will input on the course as HPLs and VLs as appropriate to meet a collaborative approach to teaching that aims to embed employer and service provider input in to all aspects of the course. Additionally, as members of 'Learning for Public Health West Midlands', the course team will have access to a community with a concern for the teaching of public health which cuts across organisational boundaries and recognises all levels of the workforce and education. This provides a point of engagement with a wide range of employers active in public health in the West Midlands.
- The Director for Public Health, Sandwell and the Assistant Public Health Director at NHS Worcestershire (appointed to the Institute faculty as an Associate Professor) have contributed their extensive knowledge of the local NHS and Public Health organisations to engage with local employers and public health service providers.
- Students achieving a 2.1 or higher may be encouraged to progress to a PhD and the team is committed to supporting students aspiring to progress to studying for their doctorate.

### **Potential Careers and areas of career development:**

The course is aimed at the wider public health workforce and therefore the range of public health career opportunities is very diverse and will depend on whether you want to work for a local, national or international organisation. Career opportunities include local, national and international NGOs, government health departments including the NHS, local authorities and policy departments at national government level, the World Health Organisation and the United Nations, and other private sector and third sector organisations. Examples of currently advertised public health career opportunities include:

- Community Project Officer
- Campaigner/ Health Promoter
- Health Improvement Practitioner
- Health Improvement Specialist - Communications and Behaviour Change
- Health Improvement Specialist - Public Health Nutrition
- Public Health Information Analyst
- Public Health Support Officer
- Assistant Public Health Strategist
- Assistant Head of Public Health Information

Practitioners developing careers in public health medicine tend to follow special interests, for example in one of the following areas:

- Communicable disease control and environmental health
- Primary care issues, e.g. public health support to primary care trusts
- Clinical governance and evidence based medicine
- Planning and information
- Academic public health, e.g. epidemiological research, critical appraisal and systematic review of evidence

Graduates will find many further opportunities to work in public health roles in a range of organisations working in areas such as epidemiology, biostatistics and health service, environmental health, community health, behavioural health, health economics, public policy and occupational health.

### **Careers Support for Postgraduate Students:**

Post graduate students have often undertaken a Masters degree with specific career development in mind, but in some cases students may be seeking to change their career

direction, either way the career support and guidance for progression in the public health field will help you to target your next move effectively. The course team and University career advisors will advise you how to:

- Access relevant networks
- Develop a career development strategy
- Compile effective CV and portfolio material for approaching interviews and presenting yourself to relevant organisations

**Please note:** This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module outlines.