Programme Specification for the MSc in Health Policy Course

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 he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification provides a source of information for students and prospective students seeking an understanding of the nature of the programme and may be used by the College for review purposes and sent to external examiners. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods can be found in the course handbook online at [http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/globalhealthpolicy/courses/mschealthpolicy](http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/globalhealthpolicy/courses/mschealthpolicy) The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the College and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency.

1. **Awarding Institution:** Imperial College London
2. **Teaching Institution:** Imperial College London
3. **External Accreditation by Professional / Statutory Body:** N/A
4. **Name of Final Award (BEng / BSc / MEng, MSc etc.):** MSc
5. **Programme Title (e.g. Biochemistry with Management):** Health Policy
6. **Date of production / revision of this programme specification:** October 2012
7. **Name of Home Department:** Surgery and Cancer
8. **Name of Home Faculty:** Medicine
9. **UCAS Code (or other coding system if relevant):** A3G124

10. **Relevant QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s) and/or other external/internal reference points (please select and list the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) for your programme, where appropriate, which can be found at: [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx) There may be other external /internal reference points that you may also wish to add here):**

Politics and International Relations, Social Policy and Administration

11. **Level(s) of programme within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)**

| Master's (MSc, MRes, MBA, PG Diploma and PG Certificate etc.) | Level 7 |

12. **Mode of Study:** Part time for 2 years
13. **Language of Study:** English
14. **Educational aims/objectives of the programme** (when completing this section you may wish to indicate how the programme supports the College Mission Statement ([http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/planning/strategy/strategicplan#Mission](http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/planning/strategy/strategicplan#Mission)), Subject Benchmark Statements (}
The programme aims/objectives are to:

- Provide students with a theoretical and practical understanding of health policy from leading health policy academics and practitioners.
- Allow students to draw on their own experiences as they learn about the latest health policy innovations from around the world, giving them an international comparative perspective.
- Help student’s quantitative and qualitative research techniques to be able to carry out their own original study in health policy.
- Give students the ability to critique existing and emerging health policy on the basis of evidence and their knowledge.
- Equip students for future roles as leading health policy makers.
- Attract students both from within the UK and abroad

In keeping with Imperial College’s strategic intent “to develop our range of academic activities to meet the changing needs of society, industry and healthcare” this course will seek to improve the quality of health policy-making.

15. Programme Learning Outcomes

http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/disabilityadvisoryservice

1. Knowledge and Understanding

   Knowledge and Understanding of:

   - Health Policy – What policy is, why and how it is made. This will be an underlying theme throughout the course.
   - Understanding of health policy in different contexts – Awareness of how health policy differs between countries. This will be an underlying theme throughout the course.
   - Health Systems – What a health system is, how to compare different health systems. This will be taught in module 1.
   - Health Economics – Macro and Micro economics relating to health, as well as emerging work on behavioural economics. This will be taught in module 2.
   - Funding of Healthcare – How funds for healthcare are raised and how providers of healthcare are reimbursed. This will be taught in module 3.
   - Health and Society – How public health and broader social factors impact on health in society. This will be taught in module 4.
   - Health Leadership – Why leadership is important within health. This will be taught in module 5.
   - Healthcare Delivery – The complexities and challenges of healthcare delivery. This will be taught in module 7.

Students will also gain a knowledge and understanding of the topics of their two chosen optional modules.

The teaching and learning methods for these areas of knowledge and understanding will include pre-course reading, lectures, seminar discussion, group work and presentations, personal study leading to an essay or exam.

2. Skills and other Attributes

   Intellectual Skills:
- **Critical Thinking** – This will be a key skill developed during the course as various health policies and approaches are appraised. It will develop during seminar discussions in the taught modules and be assessed in exams and essays for those modules.
- **Problem Solving** – The development of practical solutions in a limited time frame based on available evidence will be a skill acquired as part of the research project, which will require a final recommendation on how the research should influence health policy.

**Practical Skills:**

- **Research Skills** – The ability to carry out research through literature reviews, collecting quantitative and qualitative data etc. This will be taught in the research skills day and then consolidated by practical application to the research project.
- **Financial Skills** – Practical financial skills are expected to be covered as part of the funding of healthcare module (module 3).

**Transferable Skills**

- **Networking** – developing a national and international network of health policy makers. This will be facilitated by group-working during modules and social events outside the modules.
- **Communication** - Analysing and explaining complex issues in writing, giving presentations, communicating effectively in a seminar discussion. Communication skills will be developed throughout the taught modules.
- **Initiative and self-organisation** – being able to plan and run own in-depth research. The research project will help to develop these skills through the necessity of planning and producing a 15,000 word thesis.

16. The following reference points were used in creating this programme specification

- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- Course Handbook
- Politics and International Relations & Social Policy and Administration Subject Benchmark Statements

17. Programme structure and features, curriculum units (modules), ECTS assignment and award requirements

The programme is only offered as a part-time, two year course and leads to the MSc degree. The course is comprised two parts, a taught component, which is given over the first six terms, and a research component. The taught component will include lectures, group-work and student presentations. A research project will be carried out, starting in term 2 year 1 to be completed by September in year 2 (approximately 20 months). On completion of the project a written report will be produced and submitted for assessment. There will be an assessment at the beginning of the next set of modules of the previous two – either an essay submitted or an exam. The overall pass mark is 50% and the weighting of marks contributing to the degree for the taught modules and research project is: 60:40 respectively. Progression between years is automatic.

**Year one**

Part time Modules 1 – 5

**Year Two**

Part time – Modules 6 - 8

- 18. Support provided to students to assist learning (including collaborative students, where appropriate).
• A comprehensive course handbook will be available for all students at the start of the course. This will cover course timetable, course requirements, reading lists, assessment and learning outcomes.

• A standardised induction and orientation programme will be developed and run by the course administrator: this will ensure all students get to know each other and are aware of relevant college procedures and facilities: support services, library, ICT and Blackboard. The orientation will cover both the St Mary’s and Imperial Campuses.

• Opportunity to learn about other learning opportunities available for MSc students e.g. GSLSM transferable skills workshops such as Interpersonal Skills for MSc Students and Negotiating & Influencing Skills for MSc Students, as well as other workshops on presentation skills, paper writing skills and grant writing skills.

• A course staff-student Committee will meet once a term.

• Course administrator and tutor will have overall responsibility for student welfare and guidance – but in addition to this each student will be allocated an personal tutor whose role it is to provide guidance on any pastoral and academic issues.

• Students conducting research projects at an external site will be assigned a member an academic supervisor to oversee progress and support the development of a dissertation. In addition students will be assigned a co-supervisor ho will be based in the research related workplace (their employer) – this will help ensure workload and study can be appropriate balanced and supported.

Communication and networking

**Departmental/Course Induction Programme:**
Intro and Q&A with Course Management Team – Ivo Vlaev and Peter Howitt

Issuing of Security Passes
ICT Overview – Sejal Jiwan
Graduate Student Association –
Health and Safety Talk – Tracey Norris
Welcome from Lord Darzi
Intro to the Dissertation – Ivo Vlaev and Peter Howitt
Presentation on UK Health System – Peter Howitt

**Departmental/Course Feedback Policy:**
Survey Monkey is explained to the students

**Welfare and Pastoral Care:**
College student welfare services are the responsibility of the Dean of Students, Learning and Teaching who manages the Head of the Student Counselling Service, the Head of the Disability Advisory Service, the College Tutors and the Hall Wardens. The Dean of Students, Learning and Teaching acts as liaison between the College and the College Health Centre (NHS) and the Chaplaincy and works closely with the ICU Deputy President (Welfare) to enhance welfare, advice and support.

**The Library**
There are libraries at all Imperial College campuses; with print collections, PCs, study space and other amenities. The Library has extensive electronic resources, including electronic databases, electronic books and full text electronic journals. Students are able to search for electronic resources, using the on-line library catalogue and web pages, and access them from anywhere on and off campus.

[English Language Support Programme](#)
The English Language Support Programme (ELSP) offers classes, the majority of which are free of charge, to students and members of Imperial College London who are not native speakers of English.

19. Criteria for Admission

- A Second Class Honours degree, in either arts or sciences, from a UK university or an overseas qualification of equivalent standard.

- Exceptional applicants who do not hold a first degree, but have appropriate professional diplomas and highly relevant experience, will be considered on an individual basis and interviewed at the discretion of the Course Director. They must also pass a Special Qualifying Examination.

- Relevant Experience could be that they have worked in a public or private sector organisation developing health policy.

- All applicants must satisfy the College’s English proficiency requirement.

20. Processes used to Select Students

- Applicants who meet the above criteria are selected on the basis of their application form and references

- Exceptional applicants who do not hold a first degree, but have appropriate professional diplomas and highly relevant experience, will be considered on an individual basis and interviewed at the discretion of the Course Director. They must also pass a Special Qualifying Examination.

21. Methods for Evaluating and Improving the Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning

a) Methods for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards:

The external examiner system and Boards of Examiners are central to the process by which the College monitors the reliability and validity of its assessment procedures and academic standards. Boards of Examiners comment on the assessment procedures within the College and may suggest improvements for action by relevant departmental teaching Committees.

At programme level, the Head of Department has overall responsibility for academic standards and the quality of the educational experience delivered within the department.

The Faculty Studies Committees and the Graduate School's Master’s Quality Committees review and consider the reports of external examiners and accrediting bodies and conduct periodic and internal routine reviews of programmes. Regular reviews ensure that there is opportunity to highlight examples of good practice and ensure that recommendations for improvement can be made.

Most of the College’s undergraduate programmes are accredited by professional engineering and science bodies or by the General Medical Council. Accreditation provides the College with additional assurance that its programmes are of an appropriate standard and relevant to the requirement of industry and the professions. Some postgraduate taught courses are also accredited.

b) Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards:

The Senate oversees the quality assurance and regulation of degrees offered by the College. It is charged with promoting the academic work of the College, both in teaching and research, and with regulating and supervising the education and discipline of the students of the College. It has
responsibility for approval of changes to the Academic Regulations, major changes to degree programmes and approval of new programmes.

The **Strategic Education Committee** includes representatives of academic staff and academic support services. The SEC has four Committees reporting to it: the e-Learning Strategy Committee (e-LSC), the Strategic Humanities Committee, the Graduate Education Strategy Committee and the Recruitment and Admissions Strategy and Policy Committee (RASPC), which also reports to the SRC). The SEC reports to the Management Board and also submits regular reports to Senate for information and is responsible for in developing and implementing the College’s educational strategy.

The **Quality Assurance Advisory Committee** (QAAC) is the main forum for discussion of QA policy and the regulation of degree programmes at College level. QAAC develops and advises the Senate on the implementation of codes of practice and procedures relating to quality assurance and audit of quality and arrangements necessary to ensure compliance with national and international standards.

The **Faculty Studies Committees** and the **Graduate School Master’s Quality Committees** are the major vehicle for the quality assurance of undergraduate / Master’s courses respectively. Their remit includes: setting the standards and framework, and overseeing the processes of quality assurance, for the areas within their remit; monitoring the provision and quality of e-learning; undertaking reviews of new and existing courses; noting minor changes in existing programme curricula approved by Departments; approving new modules, changes in module titles, major changes in examination structure and programme specifications for existing programmes; and reviewing proposals for new programmes, and the discontinuation of existing programmes, and making recommendations to Senate as appropriate.

The **Faculty Teaching Committees** maintain and develop teaching strategies and promote inter-departmental and inter-faculty teaching activities to enhance the efficiency of teaching within Faculties. They also identify and disseminate examples of good practice in teaching.

**Departmental Teaching Committees** have responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of a Department’s programmes including the approval of minor changes to course curricula and examination structures and approval of arrangements for course work.

c) **Mechanisms for providing prompt feedback to students on their performance in course work and examinations and processes for monitoring that these named processes are effective:**

- Early drafts can be submitted for provisional review of their research projects
- Students will receive feedback on all aspects of their assessed work: written comments, grades, scoring for essays, group work, presentations and exams
- Regular 1:1 review meeting with their supervisors will be an opportunity to review progress and help address any individual areas of concerns
- 16 supervisions with the lead supervisor will occur during the research project time-frame of which 4 should be three-way involving the student, lead supervisor and the co-supervisor.
- QA measures such as course questionnaires and discussion atom Staff-Student committee will provide a mechanism for review and feedback.
- Course Management Team will review performance and outcomes of individual modules and teaching sessions and assessment management
- Viva with External Examiners

d) **Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience and how students are provided with feedback as to actions taken as a result of their comments:**

- Questionnaires for each module of teaching will provide a form of review and feedback. Module reviews will be shared at Staff-Student Committee and Management Team meetings.
Course Director will undertake an annual course review – this will be considered by the Staff-student committee and the IC Departmental Teaching Committee

An independent external review of the course will be undertaken every 2 years – the Institute of Government have agreed to do this: findings will be submitted to GLSLM Post Graduate Quality Committee

Minutes of each Staff-Student Committee will be shared with Divisional Teaching Committee

Peer teaching observations

External Examiners Reports and Feedback

Students are invited to participate in surveys so that student feedback on the College and its courses can be obtained and used to enhance provision. External surveys in which students participate include:

- National Student Survey (NSS)
- Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)
- International Student Barometer (ISB)

Internal surveys include:

- Survey Monkey evaluation on all modules taught
- SOLE (undergraduate student online evaluation exercise)
- PG SOLE (Master’s student online evaluation exercise)
- TOLE (tutor online evaluation exercise)

Staff-Student committees are the primary arenas for staff-student engagement at a Departmental level. Staff-student committees are run slightly differently according to the size and UG:PG ratio of the Department. Most Departments have separate committees for undergraduates and postgraduates. A range of issues are discussed from SOLE and PG SOLE reports, external examiner reports and curriculum changes to practical issues, such as the availability of computers and pastoral care. Staff-Student Committees are normally chaired by a student who will liaise with the Department and fellow students to agree an agenda for the meeting in advance.

e) Mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of the personal tutoring system:

- MSc Staff-Student Committee
- Course Management Meetings, with student representatives
- Questionnaires for student feedback and review
- Annual Course Director review – student and supervisor interviews
- Independent course review – student and supervisor interviews
- Student feedback evaluation

f) Mechanisms for recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching, research supervision, pastoral care and supporting the student experience:

Staff are encouraged to reflect on their teaching, in order to introduce enhancements and develop innovative teaching methods. Each year College awards are presented to academic staff for outstanding contributions to teaching, pastoral care, supporting the student experience or research supervision. A special award for Teaching Innovation, available each year, is presented to a member of staff who has demonstrated an original and innovative approach to teaching. Nominations for these awards come from across the College and students are invited both to nominate staff and to sit on the deciding panels.

g) Staff development priorities for this programme include:

- Course development and programme management
- Ensure financial viability of the course
- Ensure strategic fit within the aims and objectives of the Institute of Global Health Innovation and the Centre for Health Policy
• Ensure appropriate marketing of the course
• Oversee quality assurance for the course: review feedback, attendance, content, assessment outcomes
• Provide reports to the Head of Department once a term
• Pastoral Care Arrangements
• Examinations
• Health and Safety

22. Regulation of Assessment

a) Assessment Rules and Degree Classification:

The Pass Mark for Master’s programmes is 50%. In order to be awarded a result of merit, a candidate must obtain an aggregate mark of 60% or greater; a result of distinction requires an aggregate mark of 70% or greater.

Where appropriate, a Board of Examiners may award a result of merit where a candidate has achieved an aggregate mark of 60% or greater across the programme as a whole AND has obtained a mark of 60% or greater in each element with the exception of one element AND has obtained a mark of 50% or greater in this latter element.

Where appropriate, a Board of Examiners may award a result of distinction where a candidate has achieved an aggregate mark of 70% or greater across the programme as a whole AND has obtained a mark of 70% or greater in each element with the exception of one element AND has obtained a mark of 60% or greater in this latter element.

Further information is available in the Academic and Examination Regulations

The marking scheme for this programme is available at:

b) Processes for dealing with mitigating circumstances:

The College’s Extenuating Circumstances Affecting Academic Performance: Policy and Procedures makes provision for Boards of Examiners to use their discretion where extenuating circumstances are independently corroborated and are judged by the advisory panel to be of sufficient severity to have substantially affected performance.

c) Processes for determining degree classification for borderline candidates:

Candidates should only be considered for promotion to pass, merit or distinction if their aggregate mark is within 2.5% of the relevant borderline. Nevertheless, candidates whom the Board deems to have exceptional circumstances may be considered for promotion even if their aggregate mark is more than 2.5% from the borderline. In such cases the necessary extra marks should be credited to bring the candidate’s aggregate mark into the higher range. Detailed records of all decisions should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Board.

d) Role of external examiners

The external examiner system and Boards of Examiners are central to the process by which the College monitors the reliability and validity of its assessment procedures and academic standards. External examiners’ primary duties are to ensure that the standard of the College’s degrees is consistent with that of the national sector; to ensure that assessment processes measure student achievement rigorously and fairly and that the College is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmarks statements. External examiners gather evidence to support their judgement through the review of course materials, approval of draft question papers, assessment of
examination scripts, projects and coursework, and in some instances, through participation in viva voce and clinical examinations. External examiners are members of Boards of Examiners and participate in the determination of degree classifications and student progress.

External examiners submit their reports to the Rector and President. The reports are scrutinised by the Pro-Rector (Education) and by the Registry QA team to identify any points of concern. These are then referred to the HOD and Chairman of the Board of Examiners, with a request to comment on the points raised and to explain how any concerns will be addressed. The reports and Departmental comments are subsequently considered by the relevant Faculty Studies Committee or Graduate School MQC, which may seek further assurances from a Department on the resolution of a particular problem. The committees will also consider examples of good practice raised by the external examiners. Following consideration of the reports, the Registry provides feedback to external examiners. From 2011-12 external examiner reports, and the departmental responses to them, are available on the College's intranet.

23. Indicators of Quality and Standards

Course evaluation and review has been outlined above for teaching, assessment, curriculum and outcome standards. Monitoring of support and supervision for students has also been detailed.

In addition the following committees will have responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards:

- MSc Student-Staff Committee
- Course Management Team with Student Representative
- Board of Examiners
- Divisional Teaching Committee
- GSLSM Postgraduate Quality Committee
- Imperial College Quality and Academic Review Committee
- Imperial College, Senate

24. Key sources of information about the programme can be found in

http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/globalhealthpolicy/courses/mschealthpolicy