Imperial College London

Programme Specification for the Master of Public Health (MPH)

> 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 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 of each module can be found in the course handbook or on-line at http://www1.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/teaching/postgraduate/taughtcourses/masterspublichealth/

1. **Awarding Institution:**   Imperial College London

2. **Teaching Institution:**   Imperial College London

3. **External Accreditation by Professional / Statutory Body:** The course is not externally accredited.

4. **Name of Final Award**:   MPH

5. **Programme Title**:   Master of Public Health

6. **Name of Department / Division:**   School of Public Health

7. **Name of Faculty:**   Faculty of Medicine

8. **UCAS Code** (or other coding system if relevant):   A3BH

9. **Relevant QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s) and/or other external/internal reference points**
The UK Faculty of Public Health Part A. Syllabus http://www.fph.org.uk/part_a_exam
This MPH has been designed to cover some but not all sections of the Faculty's Part A. Exam syllabus.

10. **Level(s) of programme within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ):**
Master's: level 7

11. **Mode of Study**
The programme is available full-time over 12 calendar months.

12. **Language of Study:** English

13. **Date of production / revision of this programme specification:** 20 September 2013.

14. Educational aims/objectives of the programme

This MPH aims to provide a comprehensive introduction to public health for students who intend to pursue careers in public health practice, management and/or research at local, national and/or supranational levels. It offers a cutting-edge knowledge and skills base in the principles and methods of public health and a creative and supportive learning environment. The programme has a special focus on the development of quantitative analytical skills for public health, epidemiology and health services research.

Students are offered a choice of study pathways. They may pursue the MPH by following the general curriculum or they may specialise their studies in global health if they wish by choosing to follow a **Global Health stream of the MPH.**

The aim of the Global Health stream is to train MPH students to contribute to improvements in global health. This pathway will be of particular interest to those who want to expand their knowledge on health issues in low and middle income settings. Students who follow the Global Health stream will share a number of core modules with all other MPH students, and selected modules and lectures with MSc in Epidemiology and BSc in Global Health. In addition, the Global Health stream will include new modules developed exclusively for this stream. These modules will outline current global health challenges and provide insights into innovative responses to meet these challenges, within the context of a complex global political and economic environment. Global Health stream students are expected to follow the schedule of the MPH and are subject to the same assessments and requirements, unless it is explicitly specified otherwise.

Objectives:
- To develop skills to design, analyse, interpret and evaluate/criticise epidemiological and biomedical research;
- To demonstrate an understanding of the essential principles of modern biostatistical methods;
- To apply current research methods in key areas of chronic disease epidemiology, infectious disease epidemiology and environmental exposure;
- To demonstrate skills in health information analysis, report writing and communication.

Plus for MPH (General stream):
- To demonstrate a critical understanding of, and skills in, needs assessment, health equity audit, health care evaluation; changing health behaviour, health intervention planning; health systems, policy and financing and health economics.

And for MPH (Global Health stream):
- To understand the health, economic, political, social and bio-medical challenges and innovations associated with poor health that can affect people based anywhere in the world and that need global initiatives to address them.

15. Programme Learning Outcomes

1. Knowledge and Understanding

Knowledge and understanding of:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
i) fundamental principles of epidemiology and public health; ii) modern technologies of public health practise and research; iii) public health applied to maximising population health gain from the exploration, understanding and limiting of modifiable risk factors for disease; iv) practical research techniques, including an understanding of the strengths and limitations of epidemiological methods, biostatistics as well as those of other public health methods for population health improvement; v) detailed knowledge and understanding of the essential facts, concepts, principles and theories relevant to the student's chosen research project; vi) management and communication skills, including problem definition, project design and management, decision processes, teamwork, written and oral reports, scientific publications.	Acquisition of i) to iv) is through a combination of lectures, seminars and formative course-work (October to April). Acquisition of v) is through the individual, supervised research project (May to September). Acquisition of vi) is through a combination of lectures, exercises, coursework, small group projects with group and individual presentations. Throughout the course the students are encouraged to undertake independent reading both to supplement and consolidate what is being taught/learnt and to broaden their individual knowledge and understanding of the subject. Assessment of the knowledge base is through a combination of unseen written examinations (i-iv and vi), essays, individual- and team-projects, oral/poster/video presentations (i - iv), and the individual research project report and viva (v - vi).

2. Skills and other Attributes

Intellectual (thinking) skills:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies:
i) understand the nature of public health in terms of the various underlying approaches and the range of skills required to carry out public health action; ii) integrate and evaluate information from a variety of sources; iii) formulate and test hypotheses; iv) be creative in the solution of problems and in the development of hypotheses; v) plan, conduct and write-up a programme of original research.	Intellectual skills are developed through the teaching and learning methods outlined above and in section 14 above. Analysis and problem solving skills are further developed through course work, team work and tutorials. Experimental design and research skills are developed in lectures and practical work and subsequently in the individual research project. Individual formative feedback is given to students on course work including oral presentations. The exams, held in January and April provide important early feedback on student progress. Assessment of thinking skills is partly achieved through coursework, unseen written examinations and the individual research project but also in practicals and other coursework.

Practical skills:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies:
i) design epidemiological studies; ii) use statistical packages to analyse data; iii) interpret experimental results and determine their strength and validity; iv) prepare technical reports; v) give technical presentations; vi) use the scientific literature effectively; vii) use other computational tools and packages.	Practical skills are developed through the teaching and learning programme outlined above (and in section 14). Practical public health skills are developed through i), ii) and iii). Skills iv) and v) are taught and developed through feedback on written reports and oral presentations. Skill vi) is developed through lectures, coursework reports and essays, and the individual supervised research project. Skill vii) is taught and developed through coursework exercises and project work.

Professional skills development:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
i) communicate effectively through oral presentations, data processing, analysis and presentations, written reports and scientific publications; ii) apply statistical and modelling skills; iii) management skills: decision processes, objective criteria, problem definition, project design and evaluation, risk management, teamwork and coordination; iv) integrate and evaluate information from a variety of sources; v) transfer techniques and solutions from one discipline to another; vi) use Information and Communications Technology; vii) manage resources and time; viii) learn independently with open-mindedness and critical enquiry; ix) learn effectively for the purpose of continuing professional development.	Professional skills are developed through the teaching and learning programme outlined above and in section 14. Skill i) is taught through coursework and developed through feedback on reports, essays and oral presentations. Skill ii) is taught through lectures and practical work and developed, as appropriate, during individual research project. Skills iii) to v) are developed through lectures, course and project work. Skill vi) is developed through computer-based exercises, projects and other coursework activities and individual learning. Skill vii) is developed throughout the course within a framework of staged coursework deadlines and the split examination system. Although not explicitly taught, skills viii) and ix) are required, encouraged and developed throughout the course, which is structured and delivered in such a way as to promote this. Skill i) is assessed through coursework, workshop presentations, written examinations and the oral examinations. Skill ii) is assessed through coursework, written examinations and project work. Skills iii) to v) are assessed in teamwork and coursework. The other skills are not assessed formally.

In addition to the training embedded in the programme, the Graduate School runs a Professional Skills Development programme for Master's level students. The programme, consisting of the "MasterClass" workshops and e-learning modules, aims to help students develop the skills needed both in their academic studies and in obtaining and progressing in their future careers. The Careers Advisory Service also provides training and support for students on career options, job seeking and interviews.

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

- MPH Course Handbook 2012-2013
- The UK Faculty of Public Health Part A Syllabus
  http://www.fphm.org.uk/exams/part_a/syllabus.asp
- UK QAA Masters Degree Characteristics reference document (Draft September 2009)

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

Key features of the programme

The programme is an intensive full-time course requiring active study for a full 12 months.

The course is comprised of a taught component for the first two terms and a research component in the third. The taught component includes lectures, practical exercises, tutorials, team-work and student presentations.

From May until September (4 months), the research project will be carried out, in one of the host departments or in organisations associated with the MPH. The titles of the research projects offered by prospective supervisors will be made available before the start of Term II.

On completion of the project a written dissertation will be produced and submitted for an examination followed by a viva in September with an internal and external examiner.

The overall pass mark is 50% and the assessed coursework, written examinations and the research project contribute 30%, 30% and 40% of the marks, respectively.

Term one

Induction week

Modules for all MPH students:
Introduction to statistical thinking and data analysis (double module)
Principles and Methods of Epidemiology (double module)
Research Skills
Chronic Disease Epidemiology and the Burden of Disease

Modules for MPH (General stream):
Infectious Disease Epidemiology
Health Improvement
Global Health

Modules for MPH (Global Health stream):
Global Health Challenges

Hours class-based study	**330**
Hours self-directed study (including revision during winter recess)	**300**

Assessments:

Formative assignment (a public health essay) with tutor feedback	
Exam Paper I	15%
Global health assignment (coursework)	6%

Term Two

Modules for all MPH students:
Health Economics
Health Systems, Policy and Financing
Social Science and Public Health
Health Information (half-module)
Options: Social Epidemiology or Genetics and Evolution of Infectious Pathogens
Options: Evidence Synthesis or Exposure Assessment

Modules for MPH (General stream):
Public Health in Action
Improving Health Services
Health Protection

Modules for MPH (Global Health stream):
Global Health Governance
Global Health Innovation (double module)

Hours of class-based study	**330 hours**
Hours self-directed study (including revision during Spring recess)	**300 hours**

Assessments:

Exam Paper II	15%
Health intervention mini-project	15%
Oral presentation of mini-project	3%
Health Economics assignment	3%
Health Systems, Policy and Financing assignment	3%

Term Three

Research project	
Preparation of research dissertation	**995 hours**
Assessment of written dissertation and oral examination	40%

See Appendix for Plan of MPH and MPH (GH)

Year of Course	Course Element	Explanation of element components	Total Hours spent on Element	ECTS Allocation
One	Exam papers I and II	This element contributes 30% to the final mark. There are 2 components; average mark ≥50% across two papers.	630	25
One	Mini-projects	This element contributes 30% to the final mark. There are 5 components: health intervention mini-project contributes 15%; oral presentation of health intervention project contributes 3%; two health management and one global health projects contribute 3% each.	630	25
One	Thesis	This element contrbutes 40% to the overall mark for the MPH. There are two assessed components incl *viva voce*: written thesis contributes 35%; oral presentation contributes 5%	1000	40
Total			2260	90

18. Support provided to students to assist learning (including collaborative students, where appropriate).

Departmental/Course Induction Programme:
Students receive an induction week programme which provides a general overview of the course and the facilities and support available at Imperial College. During the induction week students will meet course directors, organisers, module leaders and health and safety personnel. They have a guided tour of the buildings and facilities, IT induction and an administrative session. During the administrative session important dates and deadlines listed in the Student Handbook are explained.

Departmental Facilities:
Students have a dedicated teaching/computer room at St Mary's Campus (the base campus). Students share common rooms with undergraduate students on all three campuses.

Departmental/Course Feedback Policy:
Early in the course students are asked to submit an essay for formative assessment. Problems with writing can be identified at an early stage. The student group elects a representative who presents the student views to a taught courses committee. Additionally, students are required to complete module evaluation questionnaires for review by the course committees. Feedback is taken very seriously and the course committees will take suitable action for change. Any changes made are reported back to the student representative.

Welfare and Pastoral Care:
College student welfare services are the responsibility of the Director of Student Affairs who manages the Head of the Student Counselling Service, the Senior Disability Officer, the College Tutors and the Hall Wardens. The Director of Student Affairs 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. Students are strongly encouraged to make an appointment to meet with their named pastoral/personal tutor as soon as possible after arrival.

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 Unit
The English Language Support Unit (ELSU) 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. All students are advised on support available for those who need extra help with English skills and for students with disabilities.

19. Criteria for admission:

Candidates will normally be expected to hold a good first degree in a science subject (at least an upper second) or a medical degree from a UK university or an equivalent qualification if obtained outside the UK.
Suitable candidates are likely to be those with a background in:
- medicine
- health sciences
- biological sciences
- environmental sciences

Mature applicants with relevant academic or professional experience will also be considered.

20. Processes used to select students:

Applications are assessed on a first come first served basis.

All applications are assessed by at least two senior people: the Director and the Organiser of the MPH.

Applications for review must be deemed to be academically eligible by the College Admissions Officer and must meet the College requirements for English Language before they are considered by the Course reviewers.

Applications that are deemed ineligible are turned down unless the applicant can demonstrate an exceptional background and level of experience pertinent to further public health training. In these cases, the application review team may request permission to offer a place on a special case basis.

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.

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 (normally quinquennial) and internal reviews of teaching provision. Regular reviews ensure that there is

opportunity to highlight examples of good practice and ensure that recommendations for improvement can be made.

At programme level, the Head of School has overall responsibility for academic standards and the quality of the educational experience delivered within the School. The Head of School is informed of key course matters by the Chair of the Postgraduate Taught Courses Committee and via the Committee minutes. The Committee is attended by course directors, organisers, module leaders, course administrators and student representatives. Student evaluations and views are discussed at each meeting. Appropriate amendments are made in response. Examinations and other assessments are standing items to ensure they are regularly reviewed and they remain relevant and fair.

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 **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee** (QAEC) is the main forum for discussion of QA policy and the regulation of degree programmes at College level. QAEC 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. QAEC also considers amendments to the Academic Regulations before making recommendations for change to the Senate. It also maintains an overview of the statistics on completion rates, withdrawals, examination irregularities (including cases of plagiarism), student appeals and disciplinaries.

The **Faculty Studies Committees** and **Graduate School Master's Quality Committees** are the major vehicle for the quality assurance of undergraduate / postgraduate 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 approval of minor changes to course curricula and examination structures and approve arrangements for course work. They also consider the details of entrance requirements and determine departmental postgraduate student numbers. The Faculty Studies Committees and the Graduate School Master's Quality Committees receive regular reports from the Departmental Teaching Committees.

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:

The Taught Courses Committee monitors the process of feedback to students. There are two aspects: feedback should be timely and feedback should be accurate and constructive.

Negative feedback e.g. exam failure should normally be given during a face-to-face meeting to allow student and course organiser/ director to discuss any problems that have arisen and to agree an action plan.

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:

Students are asked to evaluate each module. Questions relate to quality of teaching, quality of material, administration, length of session and are rated on a scale. There is also a section for comments. Ratings and comments are assessed by the Taught Courses Committee and with the individual lecturer and corresponding module leader. Changes can then be agreed. The student representative provides feedback to the committee at least termly. The committee usually responds immediately via the student representative.

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

The student representative is asked to inform the Courses Committee on matters of student satisfaction with the pastoral tutoring system. Individual students and pastoral tutors may approach the Course Organiser or the Course director for advice on an ad hoc basis.

Pastoral tutors receive a written guide on the role of the tutor. All pastoral tutors are encouraged to complete the College training programme in pastoral care.

f) Mechanisms for recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching and in pastoral care:

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 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:

- Active research programmes in public health, epidemiology, biostatistics and infectious disease epidemiology to remain up to date with the field
- Teaching performance and development is reviewed in an annual personal review and development meeting.
- Continuing professional development courses are available to staff
- New lecturers are required to undergo training.

22. Regulation of Assessment

a) Pass mark and awards

The pass mark for postgraduate taught courses is 50%. In order to be awarded the MPH candidates must normally obtain a mark of at least 50% in each element. To gain MPH with Merit, a candidate

must normally obtain a mark of 60% in each element. A result of MPH with Distinction normally requires a mark of 70% in each element.

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 (not the dissertation) 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 (not the dissertation) AND has obtained a mark of 60% or greater in this latter element.

b) Processes for dealing with mitigating circumstances:

A candidate for a Master's degree who is prevented owing to illness or the death of a near relative or other cause judged sufficient by the Graduate School from completing at the normal time the examination or Part of the examination for which he/she has entered may, at the discretion of the Examiners,

(a) Enter the examination in those elements in which he/she was not able to be examined on the next occasion when the examination is held in order to complete the examination,

or

(b) be set a special examination in those elements of the examination missed as soon as possible and/or be permitted to submit any work prescribed (e.g. report) at a date specified by the Board of Examiners concerned. The special examination shall be in the same format as specified in the course regulations for the element(s) missed.

Applications, which must be accompanied by a medical certificate or other statement of the grounds on which the application is made, shall be submitted to the Academic Registrar who will submit them to the Board of Examiners.

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 Provost. The reports are scrutinised by the Vice-Provost (Education) and by the Registry QA team to identify any points of concern. These are then referred to the Head of Department 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 Master's Quality Committees, 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 2012-13 external examiner reports, and the departmental responses to them, are available on the College's intranet.

23. Indicators of Quality and Standards

External examiner reports
Student and graduate feedback

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

http://www1.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/teaching/postgraduate/taughtcourses/masterspublichealth/