

## Programme Specification for MSc Public Health

<b>This document applies to Academic Year 2020/21 onwards</b>
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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 or awards</b>	PG Cert, PG Dip, MSc
5.	<b>Programme title</b>	Public Health
6.	<b>Pathways available</b>	NA
7.	<b>Mode and/or site of delivery</b>	Standard taught programme delivered using blended learning with weekly scheduled classes combining face to face with online activities
8.	<b>Mode of attendance and duration</b>	Full time over 15 months or part-time within a maximum of six years
9.	<b>UCAS Code</b>	N/A
10.	<b>Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement</b>	<a href="#">QAA Masters Degree Characteristics (2020)</a>
11.	<b>Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision</b>	February 2019 August 2019 AQU amendments to Section 19 August 2020 QAA benchmark link updated, AQU amendments

### 12. Educational aims of the programme

Public health is the science and art of promoting and protecting health and well-being, preventing ill-health, and prolonging life through the organised efforts of society. Public health knowledge, skills and understanding are essential in tackling some of the major challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as the rising tide of avoidable disease; the development of anti-microbial resistance; and the persistence of health inequalities nationally and globally. The roles that public health professionals undertake vary greatly, but all aim to improve health, prevent ill-health, and make a positive difference to peoples' lives.

The MSc Public Health equips students to gain a thorough and advanced understanding of public health practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It draws on theoretical and critical discourse and is aligned to the professional curricula and practice guidelines of:

[The Faculty of Public Health as set out in the Public Health Speciality Training Curriculum 2015](#)

[Faculty of Public Health: Good Public Health Practice Framework 2016.](#)

Students will build foundational knowledge of public health practice as well as studying optional themes which have significance to population health. A distinctive feature of the course is the project placement module, which will provide students with practical experience within public health practice. Students will be able to learn from their experiences within the workplace and from the contact with public health professionals. This is supported through strong links with the local public health employing organisations including Council Public Health teams and local voluntary organisations. Students are encouraged to draw on this experience in planning their dissertation, to further enhance their familiarity with public health practice. There is an optional opportunity for students to undertake a self-funded international work and learning experience with a social and public health development focus towards the end of the course.

The course offers a strong knowledge and skills base for those wishing to develop careers as public health professionals and to consider further study working towards professional registration within the United Kingdom. It will also build advanced practice for a range of people already working in public health roles, such as environmental health, school nursing, health visiting, health intelligence analysis and medicine. Additionally, it offers professional development for a wider group of professionals, such as teachers, social workers, police officers and nurses who can create a new dimension to their practice. The generalist nature of the public health profession means that diversity of background is a strength and the course will draw on and value highly the breadth of experience and knowledge among all its students.

This programme aims to:

1. Enable students to develop mastery in three domains of generalist public health practice: health improvement; health protection; and healthcare public health
2. Enable students to develop as evidence-based practitioners, able to search, synthesise and critically evaluate published literature in the specialist area of public health
3. Develop students' expertise in research methodology and data analysis so as to facilitate articulation and resolution of complex public health questions
4. Grow high level skills in critical thinking including with regard to the social determinants of health
5. Create students who have advanced skills in evaluation, both as reflective public health practitioners and as impact analysts
6. Enable students to develop a transformative approach to long-standing and complex issues of health inequalities, nationally and globally
7. Build competence according to best practice standards, as set out by the [Faculty of Public Health: Good Public Health Practice Framework 2016](#).

### 13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>			
<b>LO no.</b>	<b>On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:</b>	<b>Module Code/s</b>	<b>Award</b>
1.	Apply advanced knowledge and analytical capability to the surveillance and assessment of the population's health and wellbeing	MSPH4011	PG Cert
2.	Demonstrate advanced ability in evaluating and critically reflecting on the effectiveness of health and healthcare interventions, programmes and services	MSPH4014 MSPH4019	PGDip MSc
3.	Critically analyse and show originality in policy and strategy development and implementation	MSPH4012 MSPH4013	PG Cert
4.	Apply specialist knowledge of health protection, including functions of local health protection and emergency arrangements; prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable disease; the management of an outbreak and the law relating to health protection.	MSPH4017	PG Cert

<b>Cognitive and Intellectual skills</b>			
5.	Demonstrate advanced ability to analyse public health outcomes in relation to wider social, political and environmental forces and processes, using	MSPH4014 MSPH4019	PG Dip

	critical thinking and enhanced literature search skills, and including a developed understanding of conflicting interests.		
6.	Demonstrate competence in the interpretation and evaluation of evidence and the application of appropriate public health methods to research and health interventions.	MSPH4014 MSPH4019	PG Dip MSc
7.	Exercise initiative and originality in the independent design and delivery of primary research, based on synthesis of literature; formulation of a research question; and completion of a research study	MSPH4020	MSc

### Skills and capabilities related to employability

8.	Develop skill in strategic leadership and partnership and collaborative working for health, including community asset building	MSPH4015	PG Dip MSc
9.	Demonstrate competence and confidence in public health management, including the ability to critically evaluate ethical and quality dimensions of different policies and interventions	MSPH4015	PG Dip
10.	Communicate complex ideas verbally and in writing, with a high level of fluency and scholarly expertise, and construct clear and well-evidenced argument.	All modules	PG Cert

### Transferable/key skills

11.	Work collaboratively, with professionalism, self-awareness and compassion towards group goals.	All modules	PG Cert; PG Dip; MSc
12.	Build critical awareness and understanding of applied public health practice	MSPH4015	PG Dip MSc

### Learning, teaching and assessment

The course team's approach is firmly rooted in the core values set out by the [Faculty of Public Health](#) which are that public health practice should be: equitable; empowering; effective; evidence-based; fair and inclusive.

The course provides a range of accessible and inclusive learning opportunities that enable strong student engagement and achievement. The diverse student intake and the range of professional experience among students makes for a vibrant peer learning environment. Students are encouraged and supported to learn from each other, develop fluency in constructive criticism, and become reflective practitioners.

The inclusion of theory and practice, together with the breadth of the curriculum, are key features of the learning offered on this course. There is a distinctive mix of teaching through practice, classroom and on-line modes. In practice settings, on-the-job learning through supervision and peer learning will encourage reflective practice. There is a mix of lectures and more inter-active seminars, with external speakers from public health practice bringing new perspectives. A blended learning approach means that there is a robust on-line learning environment, which is supported through the use of Blackboard Collaborate and weekly resource postings and comprehensive guides to core and supplementary reading.

Assessment is through both formative and summative methods, with formative assessment involving discussion in a group setting, giving the opportunity to flourish from peer review and collaborative learning. Formative assessment will enable students to build a high-quality summative work, which has benefitted from peer and tutor feedback. It will also enable the early identification of any learning issues for which specific support may be needed. Summative assessment for those seeking to achieve an MSc requires a substantial dissertation resulting from an independent research study. Taken together, the high-quality teaching and learning opportunities for students set a strong structure of support to enable students to develop as independent learners with a high level of subject expertise, who can reflect and learn throughout their professional lives.

## **Teaching**

Students are taught through a combination of interactive seminars and lectures, a supervised project placement, independent study and personal supervision of a research project leading to a dissertation. A commitment to blended learning means that the on-line environment is an important part of the learning experience.

Seminars are designed to enable the application of learning through discussion and small group activities. Both lectures and seminars are preceded by set and focussed reading, and understanding is enhanced by both peer and tutor-led discussions. There is some specific use of the 'flipped classroom' approach where set, advance, learning takes place via on-line resources and subsequent lecture/seminar discussion focusses on analysis and understanding of the material.

The project module will be assessed by a project agreement and report that will include a reflection on transferable skills linked to employability. The project will be designed to enable hands-on experience of delivering a public health intervention in practice.

The development of independent research is an iterative learning process, building on the teaching of the Research Methods module. Those students exiting at MSc level will prepare a dissertation, based on their own primary research study, and for this there will be both a module leader and a specific, subject specialist supervisor to guide high level learning. These dissertation supervisors will be drawn from the wider course and School team.

Learning and teaching is further supported by one-to-one meetings with personal academic tutors which are scheduled on a group or individual basis. These ensure that students' progress, workload and work planning are discussed so that any challenges or areas for development can be identified and addressed at an early stage. For students following a part-time route, the introductory module to public health will be completed first to obtain foundational knowledge for the rest of the course.

## **Contact time**

Most modules consist of 12 weeks' teaching blocks. In a typical week, full-time students will have 9-12 hours of contact time per week, although this will be supplemented by personal academic tutor sessions at least once in each term. Part-time student contact time will vary dependent on module choice.

The Public Health Project module will consist of 6-face to face lectures/seminars at the beginning of the module and 3 weeks (working days negotiable with supervisor) in a public health environment.

The dissertation module (MSPH4020) will consist of an induction session combined with dissertation workshops and individual tutorial support from the academic supervisor and student led-learning in term three.

## **Independent self-study**

In addition to the contact time, students are expected to undertake a significant amount of self-directed and guided study. With the exception of the project placement module (direct contact time); in total, each 15-credit module will require 150 hours of learning, of which 36 hours will be spent in direct contact time, 78 hours of self-directed and guided study and 36 hours for preparation of assessments. Typically, this will involve ensuring familiarity with and reflection on set texts. Full-time students are expected to complete 4 modules in the first term and 4 modules in the second term with the completion of the dissertation in the third term.

Independent study is facilitated through weekly and tailored postings on the Blackboard VLE, and by more comprehensive module resource lists. There is a range of excellent learning facilities including library and study facilities at the Hive, the virtual learning environment and extensive learning resources.

## **Teaching staff**

Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course.

Teaching is informed by research and consultancy, and 66% of lecturers on the course have a higher education teaching qualification with 33% having Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. There is a strong emphasis on professional knowledge, with some staff registered public health professionals. External speakers are selected for their expertise and professional standing.

## **Assessment**

The course provides opportunities to test understanding and learning informally through the completion of practice or 'formative' assignments. Each module has one or more formal or 'summative' assessment which is graded and counts towards the overall module grade.

The precise assessment requirements for an individual student in an academic year will vary according to the mandatory and optional modules taken, but a typical formal summative assessment pattern for a full-time student is:

- Term 1: Essay, case study, reflective report, presentation and seminar
- Term 2: Seen exam, project report, research report and proposal, critical appraisal
- Term 3: 15,000-word dissertation

### **14. Assessment strategy**

The programme follows the University [assessment policy](#). The detail of assessment method and the style of marking is made clear to students at an early stage and this is outlined in the course handbook. Assessment takes place throughout the course and is designed to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate advanced subject knowledge; mastery of critical thinking and academic skills; practice learning from the project module and learning from independent study.

Both formative and summative assessment are used, and formative assessment takes place in the first half of each module, providing opportunities to test understanding and learning informally. This forms part of an iterative process of learning and working towards summative, formal, and graded assessment. Feedback from formative assessment is provided to students and there are opportunities to reflect on and discuss this directly with personal academic tutors and module leaders. Formative assessments may also be

prepared and delivered in groups, and there is usually some element of discussion and presentation in the seminar setting, building skills of reflection and constructive criticism.

There is a vibrant assessment strategy, with some variety of assessments across modules to promote inclusivity and fairness, allowing different strengths, learning styles and backgrounds to be recognised and valued. The assessment strategy across modules, also includes some consistency to allow students to master the assessment process. Requirements are made clear at the start of each module, with reasonable adjustment made for those students with additional needs.

## 15. Programme structures and requirements

Module Code	Module Title	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)			
		Credits (Number)	PG Cert	PG Dip	MSc
MSPH4011	Introduction to Public Health	15	M	M	M
MSPH4012	Health Improvement	15	M	M	M
MSPH4013	Public Health Leadership and Management	15	M	M	M
MSPH4014	Introduction to Research Methods in Public Health	15		M	M
MSPH4015	Public Health Project Module	15		M	M
MSPH4016	Global Health	15		M	M
MSPH4017	Health Protection	15	M	M	M
MSPH4019	Advanced Research Methods	15		M	M
MSPH4020	Dissertation	60			M
<b>Total Credits</b>			<b>60</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>PG Certificate</b>					
To be awarded the PG Cert Public Health students must successfully complete 60 credits at Level 7: MSPH4011, MSPH4012, MSPH4013 and MSPH4017.					
<b>PG Diploma</b>					
To be awarded the PG Dip Public Health students must successfully complete the PG Certificate, plus MSPH4014, MSPH4015, MSPH4016 and MSPH4019 to a total minimum of 120 credits at Level 7.					
<b>Masters (MSc)</b>					
To be awarded the Masters in Public Health, students must successfully complete a total of 180 credits at Level 7 including 60 credits from the dissertation (MSPH 4020).					

The PG Cert; PG Dip and MSc are available part time and full time. International students will need to clarify visa requirements before starting the course and are **NOT** eligible to study on a part-time basis. A full course map of the modules across the academic year is included in the course handbook. Part-time students can be registered on the course for up to a maximum of 6 years but are recommended to complete the course in three years, completing 1 or 2 modules each term.

## 16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

The following sources have been used throughout the course to inform the course structure and to align its content with the requirements for professional registration at practitioner and specialist level, although it should be noted that the course itself does not specifically lead to registration:

- [QAA Master's Degree Characteristics \(2020\)](#)

- [The Faculty of Public Health Public Health Speciality Training Curriculum 2015](#) and [Good Public Health Practice Framework 2016](#)
- [The UK Public Health Register](#)
- Public Health England, as set out in [Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework 2016](#)
- The European Agency for [Accreditation in Public Health Education, APHEA](#)
- The work based learning aspects of the course comply with the University's (2016) [Policy on the Management of Work-based and Placement Learning](#)
- The award is located at [Level 7 of the FHEQ](#) and the [University of Worcester \(UW\) Taught Course Regulatory Framework](#)

## 17. Support for students

### Personal Academic Tutors

Students are allocated to a Personal Academic Tutor who will also be one of the course team. The Personal Academic Tutor should be a first point of contact within the University and students are encouraged to meet with their Personal Academic Tutor at least four times during the year, although the tutor can be contacted at other times. The focus of the Personal Academic Tutor is to provide structured support to develop:

- Awareness of strengths and weaknesses
- Greater understanding of how study in the discipline area of public health can help achieve their goals
- Responsibility for choices in modules, work and social life
- A reflective approach to all the feedback received on course work
- A sense and a record of progression and achievement in the development of subject and generic skills and attributes (qualities)
- An ability by the student to use this greater awareness to articulate the benefits of their HE experiences to others including potential employers
- Students are supported in the project placement environment by appropriately qualified public health specialists

Student support is a central component of the course and is readily available from the wider [University student support services](#) and specifically for [Disability and Dyslexia](#)

## 18. Admissions

### Admissions policy

The course seeks to recruit from a diverse range of academic and professional backgrounds, including recent home and international graduates, and those in work in the U.K and internationally. The course is committed to widening participation, equality, diversity and inclusion and seeks to recruit students regardless of gender, socio-economic background, disability or ethnicity. Each student will be selected on their academic, professional and experiential merits. Academic and employment references will be required.

### Entry requirements

As Public Health is a multidisciplinary course, a wide range of undergraduate degrees are accepted onto the MSc Public Health, if they meet the entry criteria of a minimum of 2.2. Personal statements should show a strong interest in Public Health, and describe any

relevant work experience in the health field. This might include current or past employment, voluntary work experience, undergraduate research projects or interments.

When assessing an applicant's suitability for entry onto the programme, candidates will need to demonstrate their potential to achieve the aims and outcomes of the programme as well as evidence that their experiences are equivalent to having achieved a 2.2 at undergraduate level. The following criteria will 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 the programme

See Admissions Policy for other acceptable qualifications.

International applicants whose first language is not English require a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 in written English. Students can check their qualification with the International Recruitment Team at: [international@worc.ac.uk](mailto:international@worc.ac.uk)

International students who do not meet the entry requirements may apply for this course through the University of Worcester (UWIC) pre-Masters course.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

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**

Students are offered a place when the admissions tutor has reviewed the application, and is able to confirm that that the applicant meets the entry criteria. UK students being sponsored by their employer must provide evidence of employer approval and payment agreement.

### **Admissions/selection criteria**

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

- when they do not have the necessary lower second class Honours degree
- when the student requests an interview
- where there is a need to discuss the recognition of prior learning (RPEL)

Interviews may be conducted in person, by phone or video conference/Skype.

## **19. 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
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in module outlines.

### Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 7 days (one week) 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 7 days (one week) 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.
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.

### Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
PG Cert	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at Level 7, as specified on the award map
PG Dip	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 7, as specified on the award map
Masters (MSc Public Health)	Passed a minimum of 180 credits at Level 7 including 60 credits for the dissertation, as specified on the award map

The PG Cert and PG Dip awards are unclassified. The award of MSc Public Health may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

### Classification of Masters

The classification will be determined by whichever of the following two methods results in the higher classification.

#### Method 1

- Candidates will be awarded a Distinction where they have attained an average of A- (PD) or higher from the credit achieved with the University for the Award.
- Candidates will be awarded a Merit where they have attained an average of C+ (PM) or higher from the credit achieved with the University for the Award.

#### Method 2

- Candidates will be awarded a Distinction, irrespective of their other module results, where they have attained 90 credits at grade A- (PD) or higher

- b) Candidates will be awarded a Merit, irrespective of their other module results, where they have attained 90 credits at grade C+ (PM) or higher

Candidates will be awarded a Pass where they have not fulfilled the rules for Method 1 or Method 2, but are eligible for the award of a Masters.

For further information on Masters/MSc Public Health degree classification, see the [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#)

## **20. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers**

### **Graduate destinations**

This course will prepare students for a range of diverse employment opportunities, including within local, national and international organisations. Potential employers include local, national and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); government departments including the civil service, NHS and local authorities; international organisations such as the World Health Organisation and the United Nations, and other private sector and third sector organisations. Public health roles include public health practitioner; policy analyst; health intelligence analyst; research officer; and health improvement coordinator. Many graduates may take on practical roles such as health trainer in order to gain experience before moving into further qualification at specialist level. As they develop their careers, they may develop further specialisms in fields such as health protection, epidemiology, academic public health, health improvement, and healthcare public health. This may include study for the award of PhD, or application for national training schemes such as the Public Health Speciality Training scheme, leading to professional registration as a consultant in public health.

This course will also prepare students for progression through their existing careers in a related field, for example in housing management, nursing, social work, or community work.

### **Student employability**

The course prepares students for employment, through the development of public health specific skills and knowledge and through generic, transferable employability attributes. The opportunities for work-related learning in the project module provide students with relevant work experience which will enhance their applications for employment, giving an example of experience in practice Public health.

The careers and employability section of the University website gives more information about resources for all students in supporting job search:

<https://www.worcester.ac.uk/life/help-and-support/services-for-students/careers-employability.aspx>

Both the University and the course have long-established links with local, regional, national and international public health practice. Many public health organisations and practitioners have been engaged with the design and development of the programme. These include for example UK Faculty of Public Health; UK Public Health Register; Worcestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council, Health Education England, international health and development organisations and local third sector organisations Worcester Community Trust and Community First. Representatives of some of these organisations have input on the course as sessional lecturers where appropriate. This enables students to meet potential employers and to learn from them about their own professional career development.

The course team has strong connections with potential employers across the West Midlands region. For example, they are part of the 'Learning for Public Health West

Midlands' learning community, and active members of professional organisations such as the Faculty of Public Health; Association of Directors of Public Health; and Health Education England.

**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 associated course documentation including course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications.