

Programme Specification

BSc (Hons) Public Health

NOTE: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detail on the specific learning outcomes, indicative content and the teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found:

- (1) at www.health.bcu.ac.uk/students
- (2) in the Module Specifications and
- (3) in the Course Guide.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked within independent review processes undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency.

Awarding Institution / Body:	Birmingham City University
Teaching Institution:	Birmingham City University
Interim Awards and Final Award:	Certificate HE Studies in Health Diploma HE Studies in Health Bachelor of Science Studies in Health
Programme Title:	BSc (Hons) Public Health
Main fields of Study:	Public Health, Social Sciences, Epidemiology, Policy, Leadership, Research, Health Public Policy, Community Profiling.
Modes of Study:	Full-time / Part Time
Language of Study:	English
UCAS Code:	B910
JACS Code:	

Professional Status of the Programme (if applicable):

Relevant subject benchmark statements and other external reference points used to inform programme outcomes:

QAA Levels 4, 5, and 6 descriptors.

The Programme is mapped against the National Occupational Standards for Public Health.

The Programme is mapped against the National UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) practitioner standards.

Programme Philosophy and Aims:

Programme philosophy

Public Health at Birmingham City University recognises that public health work deals with complex and dynamic issues, determined and influenced by a range of social, economic, environmental, political and individual factors. Within our programmes we recognise that public health work is most effective when it acknowledges this range and the interaction between these factors, and develops its interventions accordingly. A further dimension to improving the health of the population will mean working to increase equality in the population. The philosophy of the courses here (both BSc and MSc), therefore are intentionally aligned to a broad interpretation of the concept of health, moving away from the more conventional (*positivist*) biomedical model, towards a more socially constructed (*constructionist*) perception of health.

The BSc (Hons) in Public Health is based on clear and well-rehearsed debates around the nature of health and the construction of the public health agenda to improve health and equality. The programme includes issues of evidence-based practice, effectiveness, accountability, theoretical integrity, reflective practice, leadership and ethical professional intervention. It strives to adhere to the values and ethics that are appropriate to public health activity together with encouraging practice that promotes equality, challenges systems and is non-judgmental of individuals. It also focuses on the health of populations, locally, nationally and globally, exploring ways of measuring and improving health from both community and individual perspectives.

We see that multidisciplinary Public Health practice includes the full range of strategic and operational activity, from the work of a Director of Public Health in a local, regional or global setting, to individual health counselling in local communities. This can include clearly defined roles (e.g. *Public Health Practitioners*) within distinct public health bodies or agencies, but we recognise the public health work and contribution of many other roles such as *Health Trainer Co-ordinators*, *Primary Care Workers*, *Community Development Workers*, *Environmental Development Workers* which impact and influence the experience of health within the population.

Public health knowledge, skills and attitude encourage teamwork, multi-agency collaboration and community partnerships as being fundamental in providing effective and efficient public health provision.

“The Public Health practitioners of the future may find themselves working along a broad public health continuum which includes individuals, families, groups and populations to promote and improve health and wellbeing” (DOH 2007).

By drawing on a social orientation to and understanding of public health, the course recognises the relationship between these differing elements of practice, acknowledging their inter-dependence.

The BSc (Hons) Public Health has been designed to be applicable and relevant to this wide spectrum of roles within public health, irrespective of their job title or professional allegiance, and whether they work within the statutory or voluntary sector. The programme does this through aligning the curriculum with the Public Health Skills and Career Framework (PHRU, 2008) and the UKPHR Standards for Public Health Practitioners. This programme has been designed with an aim to contribute towards building and shaping the public health workforce by enabling entry to higher education for future and current public health practitioners and as a potential consequence, helping to facilitate workplace promotion within current employment. Additionally, the provision of public health education at Birmingham City University at practitioner level is directed towards capacity building of a workforce that will represent both an asset and a resource for local and national agencies.

Our aim at Birmingham City University is to equip students with the knowledge and practical skills to work in the fast and ever changing and dynamic world of public health. This is whether they see their future career in local public health services or in the voluntary sector, or they wish to pursue a career in a non-traditional health setting; this course will provide an essential foundation. The provision and development of graduate public health workforce plays a key role in a workforce who share common values, ethical practices and a social approach to public health provision identified in the National Occupational Standards for Public Health and the framework of UKPHR standards, who can address competently, the three core skills of Public Health- health improvement, health protection and improving (health) services.

Should this be the start of a student's academic career in Public Health, Birmingham City University affords the opportunity to continue studies in Public Health at both MSc and PhD levels.

The BSc (Hons) programme aims to develop students understanding and confidence in their ability to interact with key public health concepts. This will develop from the concepts introduction, through to analysis and then to the more complex ability of synthesising ideas and skilfully interacting with the literature, with students formulating their own academic position on

areas of public health. In order to facilitate the development of a rounded Public Health Practitioner the curriculum draws on a range of academic disciplines such as, public health theory, physiology, sociology and psychology. Furthermore, there is a potential opportunity for students to undertake some shared learning with students and staff from across the wider Faculty of Health. The types of modules we will be looking at are:

- Developing Personal and Professional Skills
- Understanding Health
- Research Skills for Public Health
- Understanding Public Health, locally, nationally, globally
- Understanding Epidemiology in Public Health
- Contemporary Issues in Public Health
- Assessing Population Health Needs
- Health Protection
- Health Policy
- Health Inequalities
- Leadership

In developing the modules they will incorporate the nine key areas outlined in the Public Health Skills and Career framework:

1. Surveillance and assessment of population health and wellbeing,
2. Assessing the evidence of effectiveness of interventions, programmes and services to improve population health and wellbeing,
3. Policy and strategy development and implementation for population health and wellbeing,
4. Leadership and collaborative working for population health and wellbeing,
5. Health improvement
6. Health protection,
7. Public health intelligence,
8. Academic public health, and
9. Health and social care quality,

These in turn relate to the three domains of public health practice: health protection, health improvement and improving service quality.

The programme may be studied full time over 3 years, or on a part time basis over a maximum registration period of 7 years. Each module in the programme is worth 15 credits at level 4, 5 and 6. A total of 360 credits

are required for the successful completion of the BSc (Hons) Public health. Part time students are required to have achieved 120 credits by the end of year 3, 240 credits by the end of year 5 and they should have completed the full programme as a part time student by the end of year 7.

The programme includes two placement-focused modules, each at 30 credits, which enable the student to become both exposed to and participate in public health contexts. These will assist the student in their development of a portfolio, which they can use for future registration with the UKPHR. The criteria for supporting learning and assessing in practice are evident in the programme specifications and Placement document.

The Faculty of Health has an APEL Policy, which potential students may wish to pursue. This may be of particular benefit to those in public health work, and those who are currently working towards completion of their UKPHR portfolio who wish to pursue the BSc (Hons) on a part time basis. Students are informed in the course guide of the process for gaining APEL and will be referred to the Professional Development Department for assessment of their prior learning and experience.

Programme aims – to enable students to:

- Develop a range of transferable skills based on academic, professional and personal learning as a basis for continuing professional practice and development in Public Health. Including the communication of information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences
- Gain an understanding of Public Health practice and its philosophical and professional dilemmas.
- Demonstrate a range of UKPHR Public Health standards in order to facilitate registration as a Public Health practitioner
- Demonstrate Public Health practice through a rigorous integration of personal awareness, conceptual clarity, theoretical insights and evidence of effectiveness.
- Enable the students to develop lifelong learning

Learning teaching and assessment methods used

The programme is organised around classes, support sessions and tutorials, complemented by students' own private study, and all supported by e-learning through the University's VLE- 'Moodle'. In addition students will undertake 2 periods of work placement experience (one in year 2, one in year 3).

Classroom sessions will include whole group discussion; individual and small group work, exercises, presentations and seminars. Emphasis will be placed on the group process, and in this respect, process also becomes part of the content. Teaching/learning will to varying degrees be responsive to the needs of students at the time, and there is opportunity for a degree of student direction. (In places, a very student-led approach to learning will be used, so that, after establishing the conceptual frameworks / base knowledge for a module, students will be able to suggest and negotiate substantive topics which they will explore in small groups over a number of weeks). Both cognitive and affective learning will be encouraged, and part of the content will be an element of personal reflection.

Specialist lecturers drawn from the field of practice will be used as appropriate.

The assessment strategy of the whole programme is designed to enable students to demonstrate the achievement of the knowledge and skills appropriate to study at levels 4-6. The formative assessment of each programme module seeks to enable the students, along with their respective tutors to evaluate their academic ability in relation to undergraduate studies. Tutorials are available with staff to enable the students to discuss their performance in the formative assessment and consider strategies for improving their performance in future summative assessments.

The range of assessments in the programme assesses the students' abilities in a number of areas, using a variety of methods, partly in order to accommodate different learning styles. These include a review of a public health report, a personal reflective account, essay-type tasks, presentations and VIVA's. During the course of the programme the student is encouraged to keep a learning diary. This aids the development of their self-evaluation and reflective skills, in addition to aiding the development of their portfolio for registration as a public health practitioner.

Awards and Credits

Certificate HE Studies in Health
Diploma HE Studies in Health
BSc Studies in Health
BSc (Hons) Public Health

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Diagrammatic representation of the programme structure

September

January

February

June

Year 1

Term 1 (12 weeks) Modules	Term 2 (12 weeks) Modules
Introduction to Public Health, Philosophy, Concepts and Approaches 15 credits	Community Profiling 30 credits
Foundations for Personal & Professional Skills 1 15 credits	
Perspectives on Health 30 credits	Foundation for Personal & Professional Skills 2 15 credits
	Public Health Organisations 15 credits

Year 2

Term 1 (12 weeks) Modules	Term 2 (12 weeks) Modules
Introduction to Working in Public Health 30 credits	Public health through Individual Change 15 credits
Understanding Epidemiology 15 credits	Policy for Public Health 15 credits
Health Inequalities and Public Health Action 15 credits	Health Protection 15 credits
	Researching public health for evidence based practice 15 credits

Year 3

Term 1 (12 weeks) Modules	Term 2 (12 weeks) Modules
Contemporary Issues in Public Health 15 credits	Dissertation – Public Health 30 credits
Working in Public Health Contexts 30 credits	Leadership for Public Health 15 credits
Public Health through Collective Change 15 credits	Professional development for public health practice 15 credits

All the above modules are core modules for the Programme.

Support for Learning including Personal Development Planning (PDP)

Each student is allocated a personal tutor and students are encouraged to identify and, with guidance, reflect on their own learning needs and are offered support as appropriate to meet those needs:

Support for students is provided by:

- the Programme Director who co-ordinates the overall programme
- the Module Co-ordinators who are each responsible for the teaching, running and assessment of individual modules
- the various tutors who are responsible for the delivery of teaching sessions and helping students learning through the provision of learning resources and tutorial help

The Personal Development Department (PDD) provides students with academic skills support; critical analysis, referencing and numeracy, reflective writing, and support with English language development. Students can access support workshops for essay writing, reflective writing,

Personal Development Planning (PDP) is integral to the programme in Public Health.

Criteria for Admission

Candidates must satisfy the general admission requirements of the programme.

The current admission requirements can be found under the 'Entry Requirements' tab of the web page for this course.

Methods for evaluation and enhancement of quality and standards including listening and responding to views of students

The University, Faculty Health and the programme team are committed to continuous evaluation, quality monitoring and enhancement of programmes of study. There are a number of strategies, policies, procedures and guidance that are in place within the Faculty of Health to ensure evaluation, enhancement of quality and standards including listening and responding to views of students.

Students' views can be expressed in Boards of Studies, module and programme evaluations. Students are also invited to meet with External Examiners, and attend programme Quality days

There are a number of committees where the programme team and service-users meet to ensure that the programme is current and responsive to local and national developments and policy. These include Curriculum working group and programme team meetings. Changes to the programme are reviewed and accepted by the Faculty Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Subcommittee, and can only be approved following consultation with students and external examiners.

An annual programme monitoring report is undertaken annually through exception reporting includes feedback from students. The annual programme monitoring report is reviewed and approved by students, and external examiners. Action points are raised and are to be developed and reviewed for the following academic year. In addition the annual programme monitoring report is peer-reviewed. The annual report is a key document provided to professional bodies and external quality monitoring agencies.

Assessment procedures are updated by the Academic Quality Office to ensure that they are rigorous and fair. Bench marking statements are used to monitor achievement rates. Marking and moderating policies are in place to ensure that the procedures for assessment are transparent and students' work is reviewed by External Examiners, who also attend Programme Exam Boards, Quality Days and meet with students.

There are committees in the Faculty of Health that contribute to the evaluation and ongoing quality monitoring. The Executive committee and Faculty Board are the overarching committees in the Faculty of Health. Policies, procedures and guidance are scrutinised by the Faculty Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee.