

A NATURE OF THE AWARD		
1	Programme Title	Health Sciences
2	Final award	MSc
3	Intermediate awards	PGDip (exit qualification only)
4	Awarding institution/body	University of London (MSc) St George's, University of London (PGDip)
5	Teaching institution	St George's, University of London
6	Programme accredited by	N/A
7	UCAS/JACS code	N/A
8	QAA benchmark statements	N/A
9	Date specification produced	Revised 4 July 2006

B FEATURES OF THE PROGRAMME		
1	Mode of study	PT (day release, Thursdays)
2	Usual length of programme	2 calendar years
3	Other features of the programme	One entry per year in September/October

C EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME	
<p>Students will develop skill in evaluating and critically appraising a wide range of evidence which underpins health care. The course content focuses on understanding of principles and methods and can be applied to a wide range of health care environments. For the purposes of the course health sciences concern the avoidance of illness, the prevention of disease, the promotion, maintenance and restoration of health, and the limitation of disability. A number of different disciplines are involved including biological, social, psychological and population sciences.</p>	

D	LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAMME	
---	------------------------------------	--

	<i>Advanced knowledge and understanding of:</i>	<i>Related teaching and learning methods and strategies</i>
1	The limitations of existing knowledge and acceptance of a responsibility for continued learning and dissemination of knowledge	Lectures, seminars, small group work, practical work, student-led seminars, presentations, student-directed work, reading, staff feedback and supervision
2	The contributions of biological, social and psychological sciences to an integrated understanding of the human life cycle	
3	The scope of sociology as applied to health and illness and use of sociological theory to explore health care issues	
4	Epidemiological terms and their appropriate use to describe the distribution of health and ill health within populations, and the analysis of the epidemiology of diseases	<i>Assessment</i> Formative – class room discussion and exercises Summative – course work assignments, examination

	<i>Cognitive skills: the ability to</i>	<i>Related teaching and learning methods and strategies</i>
1	Argue with confidence from an identified evidence base	Lectures, seminars, small group work, practical work, student-led seminars, presentations, student-directed work, reading, staff feedback and supervision
2	Pursue the study of any contributory discipline or health care topic independently, seeking appropriate academic advice where necessary	
3	Write review papers on health care topics drawing on appropriate scientific and clinical literature	
4	Understand and evaluate a range of approaches to research, including quantitative and qualitative methods, and critically appraise published research	<i>Assessment</i> Examination, course work assignments, dissertation, oral examination
5	Use appropriate research techniques to investigate problems in health care	
6	Formulate a research question, carry out and write up a research project under supervision	

	<i>Practical skills: the ability to</i>	<i>Related teaching and learning methods and strategies</i>
1	Conduct literature searches using a variety of print and electronic media and reference academic work appropriately	Lectures, practical exercises, applications in course work and dissertation
2	Use a range of computer packages including word-processing, graphics, spreadsheets and statistical analysis applications and search the Internet	<i>Assessment</i> Presentations, examination, course work assignments, dissertation

	<i>Transferable skills: the ability to</i>	<i>Related teaching and learning methods and strategies</i>
1	<u>Communication</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine models and theories of communication and apply these to situations encountered in health care • Contribute orally to group work and discussion • Give a prepared presentation using appropriate visual aids • Present written work of an appropriate standard 	Lectures, seminars, group work, student led seminars, practical exercises, assignment preparation, presentations, dissertation preparation, reading
2	<u>Data handling</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data from primary sources and analyse it statistically • Collect and interpret data from secondary sources, evaluate and analyse it 	
3	<u>Information technology</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate visual aids when presenting in class • Use appropriate computer packages for analysing and presenting statistical data • Use appropriate computer packages for presenting written work • Use appropriate databases and search engines to retrieve literature 	<i>Assessment</i> Presentation, course work assignments, dissertation
4	<u>Teamwork</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse and evaluate models of team work • Work in groups on practical exercises and in discussions 	
5	<u>Independent learning skills</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility for the design and conduct of a research project • Take responsibility for acquiring the necessary IT and communication skills to meet the learning outcomes of the course • Work independently on assignments • Use information provided on the course to pursue the study of specific topics in depth 	

E Programme structure and features

All modules are taught at Level M. The programme consists of core modules which are compulsory:

- The Life Cycle (15 credits)
- Population Health (15 credits)
- Sociology of Health and Illness (15 credits)
- Statistics (15 credits)
- Research Methods (15 credits)
- Critical Appraisal (15 credits)
- Research Project Planning and Management (15 credits)
- Communication and Interpersonal Issues in Health Care (15 credits)

Students also take one elective module (15 credits). These change from time to time but current modules are:

- Critical Perspectives on Health and Illness
- Ethics and Law
- Evidence-informed Decision Making in Health Care
- Interprofessional Work in Health and Social Care
- Management and Decision Making
- Methods of Behaviour Change

Completion of a research project and preparation of a dissertation (45 credits) are also compulsory.

Modules are taught in a linear sequence over two years, with eleven weeks in each term. Core modules are taught in the first year and elective modules in the second year. Students must complete 180 credits for the award of the degree.

Students who complete all the core and three elective modules and their associated assessments (120 credits) but are unable to complete the dissertation for reasons accepted by the course team may be eligible for the award of a PG Diploma in Health Sciences.

'The description of the structure of the programme, including the lists of modules, is indicative and should not be regarded as full and definitive. For up-to-date information, see the course handbook'.

Programme reference points – the following reference points were used in the preparation of this specification: SGUL Level M criteria, National Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

F General teaching and learning strategies

Students are expected to be of graduate standard when entering the programme and to contribute their expertise and experience of health care to the inter-disciplinary learning which occurs on the course. Although there are some didactic sessions, teaching methods include a focus on small group work with group facilitators allocated to support each group. Students are expected to undertake a wide range of reading and private study in addition to the taught sessions and to take responsibility for their own research projects. Opportunities exist to follow specific interests in student-led work, the research project and in some of the course work. Peer support from other students is an important feature of the programme. Some lecture components of the research modules are shared with other postgraduate programmes.

G Assessment

There is an emphasis on course work which can be applied to students' work experience.

Course work assignments are set across the whole two years of the course and deadlines published in advance of the course start date so that students can plan their work. Course work assignments cover both core and elective modules and make up the majority of the assessment marks. There is an unseen examination in the Statistics and module and assessed presentations in the Communication and Research Project Planning and Management modules. A research project is completed during the course and submitted towards the end of the second year. An oral examination may be conducted in borderline cases (pass/fail or distinction) at the end of the course.

Formative assessment includes practical exercises and problems, group exercises and a group research project.

H Support for students and their learning

The course aims to provide a supportive learning environment for mature students which takes into account the demands of their professional and personal lives. It is understood that many students lead busy and complicated lives and a flexible approach is taken to deadlines where these create hardship. Excellent library and computing facilities are provided. Staff are available for consultation outside taught sessions. Peer group support is facilitated in the first term particularly by small group sessions. Pastoral support from the course team has been highly commended by past students. Individual supervision is provided for dissertations.

I Criteria for admissions

Applicants should have either a first degree in an appropriate subject plus a minimum of two years' health service experience or a health professional qualification and a minimum of three years' health service experience. Non-graduates will be asked to write a qualifying essay as part of the admissions process. Applicants who meet the admissions criteria will be interviewed by members of the course team.

J Career opportunities

The course is designed for students already in health care employment.

Former participants have found the course helpful in improving understanding of their work, managing their work more effectively, and contributing to improvements in policy and practice. Many have moved on to more senior positions in their various specialties or have been successful in moving into jobs in research, management or teaching. Most report an increase in confidence associated with greater understanding of the research basis relevant to their work.

K Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Student feedback is regularly considered at Course Committee meetings at which students are represented. A programme of peer review of teaching is operated. Visiting examiners are asked to write annual reports. Graduate surveys are conducted regularly. Individual module teams operate their own review mechanisms including oral feedback sessions. The annual course report is agreed by the Course Committee and considered by the Taught Postgraduate Courses Committee which is responsible for quality monitoring of programmes

at this level.

L Regulation of assessment

The scheme of assessment for the course is revised as necessary each year. Two visiting examiners review material produced for assessment and advise on standards. The Board of Examiners meets annually in September and identifies strengths and weaknesses of assessments.

M Indicators of quality and standards

The course was included in the QAA Subject Review of Medicine in 2000 and a score of 23/24 was achieved. Visiting examiners commend particularly the standard achieved by distinction candidates in the final oral examination and a prize (the Paul Freeling prize) is awarded most years for the best performance overall. A number of past students have moved into senior posts and now sponsor employees to attend as students. Graduate surveys provide positive indications of the value students attach to their experience on the course and some have continued to study at PhD level. Some students are successful in publishing work related to their achievements on the course.

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. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the course handbook and module handbooks. Other key sources of information are:

- The St George's, University of London prospectus
- Course prospectus
- The St George's, University of London internet site
- General Regulations for students and programmes of study
- QAA subject review report