



## SAHLGRENSKA ACADEMY

### **Master's Programme in Public Health Science, 120 credits**

Masterprogram i folkhälsovetenskap, 120 högskolepoäng

Programme code: M2PHP

*Second cycle / Avancerad nivå*

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#### **1. Confirmation**

This programme syllabus was confirmed by the Dean of the Faculty on 04-12-2019 (GU 2019/3032) and was last revised on 14-09-2022 (GU 2022/1654) to be valid from 28-08-2023, Autumn semester 2023.

*Responsible Department/equivalent:* Institute of Medicine

#### **2. Purpose**

The aim of the programme is to prepare students for continued studies at the postgraduate level and for successful participation in strategic and practical public health work at the local, regional, national and/or international levels.

Public Health Science is an interdisciplinary field that places questions about health and disease in a social context. Initially, students study the mandatory courses that focus on the points of departure for Public Health Science, such as the main arenas for application as well as common research methodologies. This is followed by more specialized courses that focus on health economics, methodologies, as well as social epidemiology and its theories, methods and practical implications. In the third semester of the programme, students take optional courses which include advanced courses as well as internship courses, where there is the opportunity to apply theoretical perspectives within the respective in-depth area in practical work within a national or international organization.

Public Health Science focuses on how the organisation of society and other structural factors (e.g. political, economic and cultural) affect health status in a group or population, i.e. through studies of the social determinants of health (e.g. income and educational level, discrimination and access to health care). With these starting points the discipline processes questions about the distribution of health outcomes within a population and “upstream” factors generating unjust differences, i.e. if variations in health status between different groups can be explained by structural factors and are therefore possible to change.

All programmes at the Sahlgrenska Academy aim to contribute to 1) an increased consciousness

about gender, equality and equal treatment, and 2) sustainable development that safeguards a healthy and good environment, economic and social welfare as well as justice for current and future generations. Public Health Science deals specifically with these themes through mapping of population health, studies of the determinants and processes that influence population health, and studies of how strategies and interventions that aim to promote sustainable health development can be formulated, implemented, and evaluated. The focus can range from local to global and be placed on processes, institutions and health issues. A human rights perspective is highlighted throughout, including the participation of civil society for the realization of the right to health.

### 3. Entry requirements

Qualification for admission to the programme requires:

- Professional degree/Bachelor's degree of at least 180 credits in a health science, social science, science, economics, arts or engineering field of education.
- English B/English 6

Entry requirements for courses within the programme are stated in respective course syllabus.

### 4. Higher education qualification and main field of study

This programme leads to a Degree of Master of Medical Science (120 credits) with a major in Public Health Sciences (Medicine masterexamen med huvudområdet Folkhälsovetenskap).

### 5. Outcomes

General outcomes for Degree of Master (120 credits)

#### Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including both broad knowledge of the field and a considerable degree of specialised knowledge in certain areas of the field as well as insight into current research and development work, and
- demonstrate specialised methodological knowledge in the main field of study.

#### Competence and skills

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge and analyse, assess and deal with complex phenomena, issues and situations even with limited information, critically and systematically,
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues critically, autonomously and creatively as well as to plan and, using appropriate methods, undertake advanced tasks within predetermined time frames and so contribute to the formation of knowledge as well as the ability to evaluate this work,

- demonstrate the ability to, both in speech and in writing, clearly report and discuss his or her conclusions and the knowledge and arguments on which they are based, in dialogue with different audiences nationally and internationally, and
- demonstrate the skills required for participation in research and development work or autonomous employment in some other qualified capacity.

### **Judgement and approach**

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues and also to demonstrate awareness of ethical aspects of research and development work,
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

### **Local outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall:

- describe and explain Public Health Science's ethical, theoretical, and methodological foundations, arenas as well as fields of application,
- describe and explain regional and social variations in the burden of disease, the processes that lead to these variations as well as how such knowledge can be the foundation for structural efforts as well as efforts directed to specific target groups,
- describe and discuss the ability of different welfare and health systems to promote a satisfactory and equal population health development.

#### **Competence and skills**

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall:

- apply qualitative and epidemiological theories and methods on current public health challenges for the mapping and follow up of populations' health status and the identification of risk factors and particularly vulnerable groups,
- explain the foundations of Public Health Science as well as evidence concerning different public health challenges and interventions, orally and in writing, and for different audiences (e.g. decision-makers, civil servants and the public),
- discuss and explain the correlation between macro-economic variables and health and apply micro- and macro-economic theories on public health issues, including inequality in health,
- plan for and carry out basic health economic evaluations by applying health economic theories and methods on public health problems and interventions.

### **Judgement and approach**

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall:

- critically review and evaluate political priorities, policies and programs at local, national and international levels with the right to health as a point of departure for a social, economic and environmental sustainability,
- critically evaluate and reflect on the strengths and limitations of health economics research with regard to theoretical points of departure, methodological aspects and as a basis for policy- and decision-making concerning public health problems and interventions,
- analyse the connection between resource utilization, prioritization and general welfare issues as well as compare and evaluate public health strategies and interventions based on sustainable development, ethical and health economics perspectives.

## Local aims

### Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall:

- describe and explain Public Health Science's ethical, theoretical and methodological foundations, arenas as well as fields of application,
- describe and explain regional and social variations in the burden of disease, the processes that lead to these variations as well as how such knowledge can be the foundation for structural efforts as well as efforts directed to specific target groups,
- describe and discuss the ability of different welfare and health systems to promote a satisfactory and equal population health development,

### Competence and skills

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall:

- apply qualitative and epidemiological theories and methods on current public health challenges for the mapping and follow up of populations' health status and the identification of risk factors and particularly vulnerable groups,
- explain the foundations of Public Health Science as well as evidence concerning different public health challenges and interventions, orally and in writing, and for different audiences (e.g. decision-makers, civil servants and the public),
- identify and explain the systematic social determinants and processes that contribute to inequality in health,
- formulate, suggest and implement specific measures that can support a satisfactory and equal health development on group and population levels.

### Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall:

- critically review and evaluate political priorities, policies and programmes at local, national and international levels with the right to health as a point of departure for a social, economic and environmental sustainability,
- analyse and explain reciprocal relationships between health equality, and (a) the organisation of welfare institutions, (b) the social determinants of health (e.g. educational level, gender, income), and (c) people's agency and room for manoeuvre (e.g. lifestyle, trust and influence), gender, income), and (c) people's agency and room for manoeuvre (e.g. lifestyle, trust and influence),

- critically evaluate and reflect on strengths and limitations of epidemiological and other public health research, both as research methodology and as policy tool.

### **Sustainability labelling**

The programme is sustainability-focused, which means that at least one of the outcomes clearly shows that the programme content meets at least one of the University of Gothenburg's confirmed sustainability criteria. The content also constitutes the programme's main focus.

## **6. Content and structure**

The master's programme (for course overview see table below) starts with the students taking courses that focus on the foundations of Public Health Science, its fields of application and common research methodologies.

One of the most important foundations of Public Health Science is to examine how inequality in health can be analysed and structurally counteracted; this is addressed in the first semester, and above all in the course on Health Equality. The course in qualitative research methods deals with qualitative research methodology with focus and relevance to public health studies.

The programme's second semester starts with a course in Epidemiology and Biostatistics that prepares for courses during the programme's second and third semester as well as for the essay where quantitative studies can be carried out in the degree project. The semester continues with courses in Health Economics or Social Epidemiology – one of the courses is mandatory, but students choose between these two courses during the first semester's application period.

The course in Health Economics focuses on how the field of Health Economics combine Public Health Science theories and economic theories and deals with methods and fields of application for macro- and micro- economic perspectives on health. Macroeconomic perspectives highlight the general health related strategies of national and international institutions. Microeconomic perspectives on health focuses partly on supply and demand for different types of health interventions, how these are used and to what extent they are cost efficient in relation to the health goals that are sought.

The course in Social Epidemiology covers the form of epidemiology that focus on mapping those social factors that affect, positively or negatively, the distribution of health outcomes within a population. Social epidemiology is particularly focused on identifying, studying and analyzing social factors (e.g. educational level, socio-economic position, gender) importance for health.

This course further develops the attention within Public Health Science to how people's different opportunities to attain a satisfactory health level can be studied and understood, as well as which societal sectors and areas of life such studies include. The course also deals with possible policy implications of social epidemiology research results, the purpose being that the student, after the master's degree, should be able to study and apply scientific evidence concerning processes and factors that promote equality.

The third semester of the programme consists of optional courses. These can be substituted with optional courses at the University of Gothenburg, at other universities in Sweden or abroad.

Within the programme it is also possible to apply for a semester-long internship course where theoretical knowledge is applied in a public health workplace.

The optional courses within the programme initially consist of a course that focuses on how to handle unjust differences in health and manage health development through strategic governance, different programs and methods and continuous evaluations towards a more equal distribution of health within a population. This builds upon the Social Epidemiology course by focusing in more depth how public health evidence can influence policy formulations, and how concrete efforts can be developed and evaluated to achieve the aim of equal health development. Similarly, an optional course in advanced Health economics evaluation is also given, that builds on the second semester course, with a special focus on Health economic evaluations.

This field has often been directed towards the cost-effectiveness of biomedical interventions, but as health promotion and disease preventive efforts have increased (in need and quantity) so too has the requirement for a strong evidence base of efficacy.

During the latter part of the third semester, additional optional courses that focus on the areas of 'Work and health' and 'Migration and health' are given.

The programme ends with a degree project during the fourth semester.

Progression in education is achieved through gradual broadening in the main field of study. The teaching is based on current research in the field of Public Health Science and the teaching methods are adapted in relation to content and subject area, yet a variation in teaching styles is sought. The pedagogy is inspired by principles of student-centered learning and should promote students' active and interactive knowledge acquisition, creativity and critical thinking.

The order of the courses may vary within the respective semester.

Please also see the appendix. Programmeoverview.

## 7. Guaranteed admission

Students who have been admitted to the programme and follow the prescribed study pace according to the programme's syllabus have guaranteed admission to the mandatory courses of the programme. Limited guaranteed admission applies to the elective courses of programme. In both cases if student satisfy entry requirements for admission to respective course.

## 8. Transitional regulations

The programme syllabus applies for students who start their studies as from autumn semester 2023. Students who after approved study leave want to resume their studies should contact the study counselor for study planning, which then takes place in accordance with the currently valid programme syllabus.

## 9. Other information

The study programme will be followed up and evaluated in accordance with the applicable Policy för kvalitetssäkring och kvalitetsutveckling av utbildning vid Göteborgs universitet (Policy for the Quality assurance and Quality Development of Education at the University of Gothenburg)

In addition, students are invited to evaluate each individual course included in the programme,

both orally and in writing. These evaluations form the basis for the continuous development of the programme. The evaluations will be compiled in writing and returned to the students together with the course managers' responses. The students will also be given the opportunity to participate in a written and/or oral evaluation of the entire programme.

Courses containing elements of internship/field studies may entail costs for students, i.e. travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses.

The language of instruction is English. Students may be allowed to be examined in Swedish, according to the respective syllabus.

## M2PHP Master's Programme in Public Health Science

Sem			Course type
<b>1</b>	<b>MPH211 Public health foundations and areas of application 15 hec</b> <i>MPH211 Folkhälsovetenskapens utgångspunkter och tillämpningsområden 15 hp</i>		<b>Mandatory</b> main area course <b>Fulltime</b>
	<b>MPH212 Health equality and the right to health 7,5 hec</b> <i>MPH212 Jämlik hälsa och rätten till hälsa 7,5 hp</i>		<b>Mandatory</b> main area course <b>Part time</b>
	<b>MPH213 Qualitative methods in public health 7,5 hec</b> <i>MPH213 Kvalitativa metoder inom folkhälsovetenskap 7,5 hp</i>		<b>Mandatory</b> main area course <b>Part time</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>MPH221 Epidemiology and biostatistics 15 hec</b> <i>MPH221 Epidemiologi och biostatistik 15 hp</i>		<b>Mandatory</b> main area course <b>Fulltime</b>
	<b>MPH222 Health economics: foundations, areas of application and methodology 15 hec</b> <i>MPH222 Hälsoekonomi: utgångspunkter, tillämpningsområden och metodik 15 hp</i>	<b>MPH223 Social epidemiology: theories, methods and practical implications 15 hec</b> <i>MPH223 Socialepidemiologi: teori, metod och praktiska implikationer 15 hp</i>	<b>Elective</b> main area course <b>Fulltime</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>MPH231 Advanced course in health economics evaluation 15 hec</b> <i>MPH231 Hälsoekonomiska utvärderingar: fördjupningskurs 15 hp</i>	<b>MPH232 Governing health equality: policy, interventions and evaluations 15 hec</b> <i>MPH232 Strategiskt arbete för Jämlik hälsa: policy, interventioner och utvärdering 15 hp</i>	Optional course main area course <b>Fulltime</b>
	<b>MPH233 Work and health: health promotion and disease prevention 7,5 hec</b> <i>MPH233 Arbete och hälsa: hälsopromotion och sjukdomsförebyggande ansatser 7,5 hp</i>		Optional course <b>Part time</b>
	<b>MPH234 Migration and health in a social, demographic and political context 7,5 hec</b> <i>MPH234 Migration och hälsa i ett socialt, demografiskt och politiskt sammanhang 7,5 hp</i>		Optional course <b>Part time</b>
	<b>MPH235 Public health work: interventions, implementation and evaluation 30 hec</b> <i>MPH235 Praktiskt folkhälsoarbete: intervention, implementering och utvärdering 30 hp</i>		Optional course <b>Fulltime</b>
	<b>MPH303 Public health work: intervention planning and evaluation 15 hec</b> <i>MPH303 Folkhälsoarbete: planering av intervention och utvärdering 15 hp</i>		Optional course <b>Fulltime</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>MPH241 Master's thesis in public health science 30 hec</b> <i>MPH241 Examensarbete i folkhälsovetenskap 30 hp</i>		<b>Mandatory</b> main area course <b>Fulltime</b>