

CONTEXT AND SCOPE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Version number: 2

Level: M

Credit value: 20 (ECTS equivalent credit value 10)

Effective from: September 2014

PRE-REQUISITES AND CO-REQUISITES

None

AIMS

This is a core unit in the MSc Public Health, the PG Diploma Public Health and the PG in Public Health with professional registration as a SCPHN (HV / SN). It can also be accessed as a CPD unit. The unit aims to enable the critical evaluation of public health practice in its political, social and historical context.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Having completed this unit the student is expected to:

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the historical and political contexts, and the theoretical basis of public health practice
2. Demonstrate critical evaluation of the impact of environmental influences upon human health
3. Demonstrate the ability to independently and critically evaluate the role and potential function of agencies involved in maintaining and promoting the public's health
4. Demonstrate deconstruction of the underpinning assumptions about health as a construct
5. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of inequities and inequalities in health and well-being, and their potential impact
6. Demonstrate critical evaluation of the evidence base for public health practice.

LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

The delivery of this unit will involve students participating in:

- Lectures accessed in person or electronically, in order to gain expert insights into the context and scope of public health
- Tutorials accessed in person or electronically to enable the independent acquisition and appraisal of knowledge
- Discussions which may be face-to-face or online, to encourage critique of theory and practice through debate, and development of oral dissemination skills
- Presentations, to develop oral, written and visual dissemination skills
- Independent reading and study to develop library skills and to acquire and appraise knowledge.

ASSESSMENT

Summative Assessment

All learning outcomes will be assessed by coursework – 100% (5000 word equivalent)

Indicative Assessment Information

Typically, students will be required to review critically a current public health issue relevant in the UK and/or their country of choice. The student will be required to consider critically the evidence base relevant to their chosen issue within its political and historical context. The students will also need to offer insights into whether the wider determinants of health impact on their chosen issue and if so, then detail how. Within this critique students would be expected to consider the role different agencies may play in their public health issue.

INDICATIVE CONTENT

- Examination of the scope of the term `public health` and its contextual historical origins (local and global)
- Definitions of health, and the social and cultural factors which affect assumptions regarding health
- The scope of the term `environment` and the potential and actual effects on human health
- Macro and micro elements of the `environment`, or `settings` which affect health and well-being
- Sources of knowledge determining what is health? How these are developed, and the dominant discourses related
- Examination of what constitutes evidence, including evidence of causation and the extent to which public health practice and policy development is evidence based
- Critique of epidemiological evidence of environmental effects upon health
- The roots of global and local inequalities in health, and the actual and potential effects upon public health and wellbeing
- Critique of the underlying policy developments underpinned by the historical origins of the public health movement
- Critical consideration of the global politics of public health and sustainable development
- Evaluation of the range of agencies which affect health and wellbeing
- Reflective and critical appraisal skills

INDICATIVE KEY LEARNING RESOURCES

Baggott, R., 2011. *Public health: policy and politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Blewitt, 2008. J. *Understanding sustainable development* (online). London: Earthscan.

Carneiro, L., Howard, N., 2011. *Introduction to epidemiology*. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill, Open University Press.

Lister, J., 2013. *Health policy reform*. Faringdon, Oxfordshire: Libri.

World Health Organisation and The Commission On Social Determinants of Health, 2008. *Commission on social determinants of health. Final report. Closing the gap in a generation* (online). Geneva: WHO. Available from:

http://www.who.int/social_determinants/thecommission/finalreport/en/

Department of Health website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health>

United Nations website:

<http://www.un.org>