Dental Public Health: Programme Specification

Awarding body/institution: Queen Mary, University of London

Teaching institution: Institute of Dentistry, Barts and The London, Queen mary’s School of Medicine and Dentistry

Name of the final award: Master of Science in Dental Public Health

Programme title: MSc in Dental Public Health

Criteria for admission to the programme: a recognised dental degree and two years post-qualification experience. Evidence of English language competence (minimum IELTS = 6.5) is required of overseas students.

Aims of the programme:

The general aims for the taught postgraduate courses offered in the Institute of Dentistry are to:

- provide full-time and part-time opportunities for those wishing to develop their skills and understanding in oral health related sciences.
- develop the research and service careers of dentists and professionals complementary to dentistry.

The general objectives of the taught postgraduate courses are to provide students with the skills to:

- conduct literature searches, and evaluate original published research.
- design research protocols, execute a supervised research project, analyse and report findings supported by references.
- demonstrate a range of transferable and specialised skills.

The specific course objectives for Dental Public Health are to enable students to:

- describe and apply the underlying philosophy of public health and dental public health.
- apply the key principles of the Primary Health Care Approach.
- compare and contrast the theory and practice of epidemiology, statistics and social sciences to dental public health.
- apply the principles and practice of planning and evaluating dental health care systems.
- discuss critically the social, psychological, behavioural and biological causes of oral diseases.

Teaching and learning:

The programme aims to promote teaching and learning enriched by original scholarship and dental research, to encourage students to become independent learners. Students will accept responsibility for their own learning and will be encouraged to develop powers of critical thought and reflection. Key skills in information technology and oral and written presentations will be enhanced. The course will offer students the opportunity to become familiar with the issues of study design, data analysis and critical thought. Assessment procedures are outlined below. Assessment procedures will be managed internally by the teaching faculty and externally through an intercollegiate University of London examination board and an external examiner who will moderate achievement within and between different courses.
In addition to the formal seminar programme, time is set aside for particular readings and reviews, discussion and problem solving for student projects, for practical exercises, and for feedback and evaluation of the course itself. Students will receive a course booklist at the start of teaching.

The course aims to offer a high teacher/student ratio so that access to advice and ease of communication can be assured. Two staff members supervise each student project.

**Assessment**

The examination has four parts:

- Two written papers: Papers I and II consist of six questions per paper of which 3 must be answered (Previous papers are available that provide an idea of the types of questions).
- Two practical problem solving exercises (in-course assessment): Part I will consist of a 3 hour session in which students will be presented with a published paper which they will be required to critically review and assess in terms of the design, methods and analysis. Part II will consist of a practical planning exercise where students will be required to produce an appropriate oral health care plan using data supplied. The background information for this will be distributed to students in March and the completed response will be required within a four week period.
- An oral examination.
- Report of a project - to be submitted by 31st August of the academic year of completing the course. Each student must write a Project Report on the research they have conducted, not normally exceeding 20,000 words.

The written papers and the oral examination will begin in the middle of June of each academic year.

Students must pass all four parts to gain an overall pass. At the discretion of the examiners and providing the examination regulations allow, a student may be given credit for one part of the examination and asked to redo the others. In extreme circumstances, where medical circumstances may have adversely affected examination performance, a medical certificate should be presented to the Course Organiser.

Formative assessment exercises are carried out during the course. You will be required to submit one short essay and one major essay during the course. The short essay will be approximately 5 pages long, whereas the major essays are approximately 5000 words. Two oral presentations, each of no more than 15 minutes length, will be made. In addition students will have the opportunity of writing timed open book and unseen answers to past examination questions.

Students will be required to make clear declarations as to the originality of the work submitted for the in-course assessment and the Project Report.

**Course structure**

The programme will begin in October of each year with an induction programme organised in collaboration with the other taught postgraduate courses in the Institute of Dentistry. Teaching is organised on a term system. Most teaching takes place in the first two terms, allowing the third term primarily for revision. For full-time students the period after the examination is for completion of project reports.

Term 1: October to December
Term 2: January to March
Term 3: April to June
A termly timetable will be distributed before the start of each term. Each term’s teaching focuses on particular topics or modules. Module details, together with a package of essential core readings, will be given to students.

Module titles are outlined below.

**Term I**

Module 1  Introduction & Study Skills  
Module 2  Philosophy of Public Health  
Module 3  Primary Health Care Approach  
Module 4  Epidemiology  
Module 5  Statistics and Computing  
Module 6  Health Behaviour & Sociology

In addition students will take part in the Institute of Dentistry’s Core Course for taught postgraduate students.

**Term II**

Module 7  Health Education & Health Promotion  
Module 8  Social Science Research Methods  
Module 9  Current Concepts & Techniques of Dental Care  
Module 10  Principles of Planning

A critical evaluation of the literature course will also take place in this term.

**Term III**

Revision

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