

Education plan

for

Master's Programme in Population Health: Societal and Individual Perspectives
Masterprogram i folkhälsa: samhälleliga och individuella perspektiv

120.0 Higher Education Credits
120.0 ECTS credits

Programme code: SPOPO
Valid from: Autumn 2010
Date of approval: 2009-10-12
Department: Department of Public Health Sciences

Decision

This syllabus has been determined by the faculty board of the Department of Social Sciences.

Prerequisites and special admittance requirements

Bachelor's degree (180 ECTS) in Sociology, Psychology, Public Health Sciences, Medicine or similar.
English proficiency equivalent to English Course B or English 6.

Programme structure

The programme is comprised of four terms with primarily mandatory courses. The first term begins with the course Population health and health equity, which presents the subject field and problematises around various perspectives of the individual, group and society and how these perspectives overlap and complement each other. The course also provides introductory knowledge of how health varies in relation to gender, age, socio-economic factors and one's country of residence. A brief introduction is also given to the medical terminology used in public health sciences, especially in the field of inequality in health. This course is followed by Social stratification and health, which focuses mainly on the origins of social stratification and its relation to health, but also social determinants like gender and ethnicity. During the next course, Psychobiological processes, stress and health, the student will learn about different theories and models behind stress, gaining an increased understanding of the connection between socioeconomic position, stress and ill health. This first term ends with an introduction to methodology, with quantitative methods from psychology, sociology and epidemiology.

The second term begins with a course in Life course approach to health equity studies, where the focus is on health and development during different phases of life, including critical periods such as the foetal period, childhood and teenage years and their significance for health in adult age and later years. After this follows two courses that more specifically focus on social differences in health during two significant phases of life: childhood and later years. The latter is carried out jointly with the Aging Research Centre (ARC) at KI/SU. This second term ends with a short course in SPSS statistics, followed by an advanced course in methodology.

The third term begins with the course Population development and social change, given by the demographics section of the Department of Sociology. During the course Welfare state, social policies and health, students will gain an understanding of how occurrences on the macro level can influence conditions of health. The course then takes on a comparative international perspective, with a presentation of regional and global changes in health over time. This third term ends with an introduction to the work of the master's thesis, so that students can get started with that.

The last term begins with an elective course on the advanced level or with an individual in-depth reading course in preparation of writing the thesis. The rest of the term will be devoted to writing the master's thesis.

The master programme is composed of both lectures and seminars. Students are expected to be prepared for the seminars and take an active part in the discussions that take place there. The different segments are assessed through written examinations, take-home examinations and/or in-depth analyses in the form of for example papers to be discussed during seminars and during the final thesis work.

Goals

The overall objective of the master's programme with its interdisciplinary combination of sociological, psychological and public health science perspectives is to give students an in-depth view of how the health of individuals, groups and populations is linked to social conditions, political and cultural processes and individual behaviours and conditions. After receiving a master's degree students should be able to apply these perspectives to deepen their understanding of health in individuals, groups and populations and specifically how differences in health arise and continue based on gender, age, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. This means that the master's programme provides students with broad knowledge of the spectrum of the field and substantial in-depth knowledge in certain specialised fields. After completion, students are expected to have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills for qualified work in the field of public health issues, more specifically surrounding inequality of health, as well as knowledge that makes continued studies on the research level possible.

After completed studies at the programme, students are expected to:

Knowledge and comprehension

- have a knowledge and understanding of the main field of study, i.e. the interdisciplinary sphere of research, where sociological, psychological and public health science perspectives on health meet,
- have in-depth knowledge of certain specific specialised fields,
- be familiar with the issues surrounding the current field of research

Skills and abilities

- have in-depth knowledge of the methodology used in the main field of the programme,
- have the ability to critically extract and compile knowledge of the health of individuals, groups or populations from the different scientific disciplines,
- have the ability to independently formulate relevant questions surrounding the subject field,
- have the ability to plan and carry out qualified studies, with appropriate methodology and within given time frames,
- have the ability in speech and writing (in the form of for example posters and papers) to clearly explain their conclusions and the information and arguments they were based on

Approach and ethics

- have the ability to make assessments in the field of public health sciences, especially inequality in health, taking into consideration relevant scientific, social and ethical aspects,
- have insight into the role of knowledge in society and each person's responsibility regarding how it is used, and
- have the ability to identify their need for further knowledge and to develop their competence in the field.

Courses

Term 1:

Population health and health equity (7.5 ECTS credits)
Social stratification and health (7.5 ECTS credits)
Psychobiological processes, stress and health (7.5 ECTS credits)
Methodology I – introduction to quantitative methods in psychology, sociology and epidemiology (7.5 ECTS credits)

Term 2:

Life course approach to health equity studies (7.5 ECTS credits)
Social differences in health among children and young people (7.5 ECTS credits)
Social differences in health in the older population (4.5 ECTS credits)
SPSS and data management (3 ECTS credits)
Methodology II – quantitative methods related to public health sciences (7.5 credits)

Term 3

Population development and social change (7.5 credits) (Department of Sociology, demographics section)
Welfare state, social policy and health (7.5 ECTS credits)
International health: regional and global changes in health over time (7.5 ECTS credits)
Master's thesis in population health – introduction (7.5/30 ECTS credits)

Term 4

Elective course (7.5 ECTS credits) or Individual in-depth studies (7.5 ECTS credits)
Master's thesis in public health (22.5/30 ECTS credits)

Degree

The programme leads to a Master of Science in Public Health

Misc

The master's programme is offered by CHESS. Some of the courses may be given jointly with the Department of Sociology (demographic section) or the Aging Research Centre (ARC) at Karolinska Institutet. CHESS is responsible for the planning and coordination of the programme.

The master's programme is given in English.

Students who have been accepted to the programme but do not complete it within the two planned study years may ask to complete the programme even after the syllabus has ceased to be valid. In such cases the restrictions stated in the syllabus for each of the programme courses apply.