



Institute for International Health & Development

MSc Health Systems

'Are you seeking a career in health planning, management or policy advice?

This new MSc programme in Health Systems will equip you with the requisite skills to advance your career.'



Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Programme Background

“Strengthened health systems, ideally based on primary health care, are indeed the route to greater efficiency and fairness in health care, and greater security in the health sector and beyond.”

Margaret Chan, Director General, World Health Organisation, 3rd November 2008

In health care there is a wide range of demonstrated effective and cost-effective interventions that should reduce mortality and morbidity. Providing these is more often than not, the official policy wherever that they need to be in place. But intended interventions are often not provided effectively where they are needed causing high levels of unnecessary death, disease and disability.

This programme aims to enhance participants' understanding of how to make health systems work better. This implies the provision of sufficient resources, the appropriate distribution of those resources and the uptake of available resources by those intended to use them. It also involves managing multiple players in public and private, formal and informal roles and developing strategies with the best chance of bringing about positive effects. The programme will equip its graduates with the necessary skills for careers in health planning, management and policy advice.

Programme Content

Participants will focus on the key components of effective health systems and the policy instruments available to support their operation. Using a multidisciplinary approach and working with global experts, students will learn how to evaluate alternative policy options for improving health system functioning and formulate appropriate responses to specific health system problems. Working throughout the programme on health systems problems in specific settings, participants will develop strategic plans to tackle those problems and through dissertation work, focus on an issue relevant to future career plans. All modules are worth 15 scotcat credits (5 ECTS). The dissertation is worth 60 scotcat credits (20 ECTS).

Programme Structure

The programme is available for full-time or part-time students, and students can start in either September or January. The full time programme normally lasts one calendar year, and part-time students can complete in two or three years. The programme consists of five compulsory modules, three elective modules, and a dissertation of a maximum of 10,000 words, which may take the form of a critical review, empirical study or a project/research proposal.

Early exit points and subsidiary awards

Students can exit their studies at different points of the programmes without losing their credits and with the possibility of gaining either a Postgraduate Certificate or a Postgraduate Diploma. These awards can contribute towards an MSc if a student wants to return to study within a period of 4 years. Additionally, any of the modules can be taken as independent short courses.

Response to the IIHD teaching programme:

‘Before starting this course I was working for 15 years, so entering the study environment again was almost like wearing a corset: it lifts you, helps you but sometimes also pinches you. It was a really rich time..a privilege to study here, to meet different people from so many different countries, to watch, to listen, to know, to compare and to learn.’

Silke, Germany

Queen Margaret University was founded in 1975 and is now located in a brand new campus east of the city. The university is renowned for its supportive approach to learning and has a strong expertise in health related subject areas. Edinburgh is the lively capital of Scotland, with a rich cultural life and close access to the beautiful Scottish countryside, the highlands of Scotland and the lovely Scottish borders.



The core modules for this Masters are:

Health Systems Development

This module aims to provide participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand the key issues in analysing the features and performance of different types of health care system, understand the main types of health system found around the world and appreciate the advantages and disadvantages of different systems for efficiency and equity. It will encourage participants to take a systemic approach to managing health system change, recognising the capacity to respond of the key actors involved.

Health Economics

This module focuses on the efficiency and equity with which resources can be mobilised and used to support health system functioning. It aims to provide participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand the key issues in health economics and economic evaluation of health care in low and middle income countries. It covers the different impacts associated with greater use of markets or planning; alternative ways of mobilising resources for the health sector and strategies to manage incentives in the health system and to intervene in labour markets.

Response to the IIHD teaching programme:

'Overall the programme is a very exciting experience .. I'm used to a type of didactic learning, the lecturer comes and gives you information and you basically swallow what they say. Here, you search for the information but you're provided with all the tools that ensure that your search is sound and solid...The interaction in class is amazing. You learn so much even from your colleagues'

Naana, Ghana



Response to the IIHD teaching programme:

'With the tools I learnt here, I hope my input will ensure that the health system can be developed towards becoming more sensitive according to the precise existing problem so that services are matched up to what is really happening. The IIHD staff are very friendly and helpful, especially in relation to the many cultures that they deal with. Here it is easy to talk to your lecturers and discuss your difficulties. In my country the relationship between students and lecturers is distanced by comparison.'

Selamawit, Ethiopia



Health and Social Policy

This module provides a coherent framework for understanding the range of conceptual approaches used in international health and social development. Theories of social change and development are examined along with diverse understandings of health; health transitions and the global burden of disease; policy processes within a global context; health sector reform; and health economics. Through discussion and debate, participants will take a critical approach to evaluating global and national policy approaches to international health, sexual and reproductive health, social development and health systems.

Health Related Research

This module is aimed at strengthening students' skills in the critical analysis and application of research methods and developing their research knowledge in international health and development. Participants will gain an understanding of epistemological and theoretical perspectives in health management research and explore a range of qualitative and quantitative techniques and their application through group work and case studies.

Research Design and Planning

The different stages in developing and executing a solid and realistic research project will be explored, including the review and appraisal of relevant literature, theoretical and epistemological approaches to research, methodological, and ethical issues. Students will gain practical and critical skills in preparing a research proposal and engaging in theoretical debates on researching the workplace. (Core module 15 credits)

In addition, students choose 3 elective modules from others on offer in IIHD including modules on human resources for health, social development and health, and project design and management; including one free choice (from inside or outside the Institute) on the basis of agreement with personal tutor.

Dissertation

The final element of the programme is the dissertation of 10,000 words on a topic chosen by the student and with the approval of their supervisor. This may take the form of a critical review, empirical study or project/research proposal, and enables participants to consolidate their learning derived from previously studied modules with respect to a chosen health issue.

Staff Biopics

Professor Barbara McPake



is a health economist specialising in health policy and health systems research. She has 25 years experience in these areas based in three university departments including the

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She was formerly the Programme Director of the Health Systems Development Knowledge Programme of the UK Department for International Development. She has extensive post graduate teaching experience and wide experience in Eastern and Southern Africa, South Asia and Latin America providing health economics and systems advice.

David Newlands



is from the Economics Department of Aberdeen University, Scotland where he has taught health economics for many years. His principal research interests are in the

productivity costs of ill health and in equitable health strategies, particularly as they relate to maternal health. He has worked principally in West Africa and in South Asia.

Suzanne Fustukian



is a social scientist specialising in governance and health systems development in fragile states. She has 28 years experience in health and

development issues, and has worked with state and academic institutions and NGOs in a variety of countries. She has also held positions in three academic institutions in the UK and has extensive experience in research degree supervision. She was a co-director of the Appropriate Health Resources and Technologies Action Group (AHRTAG), a British-based NGO.

Carola Eyber



is a psychologist whose current interests include children living in challenging environments and the strategies they develop to deal with these challenges.

Originally from South Africa, Carola has been involved in community development work in various capacities for the past 20 years. Children and adolescents have formed a major focus of this work, which has included children affected by armed conflict, child poverty, street children and child labour issues and taken her to many sub-Saharan countries and more recently to Bulgaria where she has worked with Roma children.

Bregje de Kok



is a psychologist, although she draws on various social sciences and public health in her work. Her interests include reproductive

health, critical (health) psychology, qualitative methods, including discourse analysis, and evaluation. Bregje has considerable research experience both in the U.K and in Malawi where she has conducted research since 1999. In her doctoral research, she examined constructions of infertility in Malawi by women and men with a fertility problem, their relatives and (biomedical and indigenous) practitioners.

Other IIHD staff will also teach this programme. See website for further details.

Response to the IIHD teaching programme:

'I appreciated the style of teaching here since it is so student-centred. You are allowed to express yourself and encouraged to go beyond what the lecturers tell you, to develop new ideas, discuss and debate. I would encourage friends to come here because even though the courses are challenging, life itself is full of challenges.'

Canisious, Rwanda

How to apply

You can either contact IIHD directly and obtain an application form from Lynne Fraser by post or email:

The Institute for International Health and Development, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh,
Queen Margaret University Drive, Musselburgh, EH21 6UU

Email: int-health@qmu.ac.uk

Or you can apply online at <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/registry/pg-app-form.pdf>

Please visit our website for further information: www.qmu.ac.uk/iihd

The MSc in Health Systems is delivered within the Institute for International Health and Development (IIHD) at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh. The focus of IIHD is post graduate teaching in international health and development and on socially relevant research. Our research looks at health and well being in the wider context of social development. We work with local partners to apply theory to practice and develop theory from practice. There are five MSc programmes at IIHD:

- MSc in Health Systems
- MSc in International Development
- MSc in Sexual and Reproductive Health
- MSc in Social Justice, Development and Health
- MSc in Human Resources for Health

In addition there are a range of short courses, certificates and diplomas.

IIHD is a member of the troped network, a network of European institutions for higher education in International Health. Students at IIHD can participate in troped recognised degrees by taking modules at other member universities, or the Erasmus Mundus programme with tracked pathways through the degree in International Health.

For more information on any of these contact IIHD or see our web site www.qmu.ac.uk/iihd