

Postgraduate Studies in Public Health – Overview

[[Handbook for Post Graduate Studies 2013](#)]

Students may enrol for postgraduate studies in the field of health systems and public health based on previous training in the health sciences or in any other field relevant to health systems, public health, or health care, or with relevant experience in the health field.

Those with previous learning in the health sciences are traditionally considered as "health professionals" in comparison to other professionals who are often not considered to be part of the health professions. For the purposes of our definition of a "health professional", we do include this latter group. Any discipline that can be applied to the health field and is relevant to improving health is of interest to us. Examples of the type of previous training in this second group include sociology, economics, engineering, veterinary science, environmental sciences, biology, nutrition, education and communication, law, medical technology, psychology, business administration, management and commercial sciences, accountancy, as well as inorganic chemistry, to name a few.

The essence of postgraduate training in public health is to obtain knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies that enable students to optimise the use of their expertise (gained through basic tertiary education and health sector experience) to the benefit of the complex and broad field of health systems and public health,

This means that both staff and students in the public health learning environment are mature and goal oriented, and come from a large variety of professional backgrounds. The postgraduate study programmes need to accommodate this to prevent unnecessary duplication of previous learning, and to increase the efficiency of learning by encouraging students to identify their own level, intensity, and direction of learning. In addition, most students occupy senior positions in the public or private health sector and thus do not have the option of taking time off for studies.

As a result, the programmes in health systems and public health offered by the SHSPH are extensive and complex. The basic building block for learning is a "module" which is a learning unit with its own objectives, learning opportunities and evaluation. By grouping or "chaining" modules, students can build up substantial learning in many different directions, at different levels of intensity, and at a pace that suits them within the regulated time frame of the University.