### GENERAL INFORMATION

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<th>Module name</th>
<th>Principles of Social Research</th>
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<td>Module code</td>
<td>PHM104</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module Organiser(s)</td>
<td>Leslie Kelly</td>
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**Contact email**
The LSHTM distance learning programmes and modules are run in collaboration with the University of London. Enquiries may be made via their Student Advice Centre at: [www.london.ac.uk/contact-us](http://www.london.ac.uk/contact-us).
(Enquiries from face-to-face i.e. London-based LSHTM MSc or research students regarding study of DL modules should be emailed to distance@lshtm.ac.uk.)

**Home Faculty**
Faculty of Public Health and Policy
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
[http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/php/](http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/php/)

**Level**
This module is at Level 7 (postgraduate Masters level) of the QAA [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/) in England, Wales & Northern Ireland (FHEQ).

**Credit**
LSHTM award 10 credits on successful completion of this module.

**Accreditation**
Not currently accredited by any other body.

**Keywords**
Research methods, methodology, qualitative methods, surveys.

### AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND AUDIENCE

**Overall aim**
This module aims to introduce the basic principles of social research practice and theory as applied to health.

**Intended learning outcomes**
By the end of this module, students should be able to:
- discuss how social science research methods can contribute to the understanding of public health and health services;
- formulate social science research questions and identify the most suitable methodological approaches to answer these;
- distinguish concepts, variables and indicators in research;
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different study designs including experimental, cross-sectional, observational, documentary approaches, and participatory research designs;
- identify the main methods used in qualitative research, identify the main aims of qualitative research, and comprehend the core orientations which characterize qualitative research;
- identify the uses of qualitative interviews, identify the benefits and disadvantages of different kinds of group interviews as data collection methods and describe the practical issues to consider when planning to use a focus group in a study.
- identify the main objectives of qualitative analysis, undertake a basic thematic analysis of qualitative data, and understand how to maximise the credibility of your analysis;
- distinguish between nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio levels of measurement, appreciate the role of theory in measurement, and identify...
| different kinds of validity and reliability in quantitative research; |
| identify some common problems when designing a questionnaire, and understand the principles of good questionnaire design; |
| assess the strengths and weaknesses of different sampling strategies and identify ways of making studies that use surveys more representative; |
| identify the core principles underpinning the ethical conduct of research and some of the practical challenges to applying these core principles; |
| understand which problems in health research are particularly suited to documentary approaches, describe the practical nature of such approaches, outline issues in the selection and analysis of historical data which can affect validity, and explain the nature and challenges of interpretation in documentary research; |
| appreciate the complimentary roles of different methods in health research, and understand the benefits and potential challenges of working across different disciplinary approaches. |

**Target audience**

Compulsory module for all students on the DL MSc/PGDip and PGCert Public Health programmes. This module is compulsory for all students studying the Environment and Health, Health Promotion, Health Services or General stream of the Public Health MSc.

**CONTENT**

**Session content**

The module introduces students to key concepts in qualitative and quantitative methodology; the main data collection methods used in social research for health, and perspectives from some of the social science disciplines that have contributed to public health, including psychology, sociology, medical anthropology and history of medicine. The focus is on providing a broad introduction for those who will need to read, appraise or commission social research for public health.

Click on the link below to view the content of the module textbook:

http://www.amazon.co.uk/Principles-Social-Research-Alison-Durand/dp/0335263305/ref=sr_1_3?&ie=UTF8&qid=1404465315&sr=1-3

**TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

**Study resources provided or required**

The following materials are provided to students after registration for this module once a year in September/October:

- A brief guide to studying the module.
- The main textbook is *Principles of Social Research* (2nd edition) by Mary Alison Durand and Tracey Chantler (2014), Open University Press.
- A reading list including details of both required and optional reading and links to selected papers.
- A list of useful websites.
- Access to the LSHTM Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) - Moodle, where students can access a range of materials, including some of those listed above; participate in module-specific discussion forums and Collaborate sessions and access the LSHTM online library resources.

The textbook will be sent to students. All other materials may be accessed via the LSHTM VLE – Moodle.
**Teaching and learning methods**

Learning is self-directed against a detailed set of learning objectives identified at the start of each chapter of the module textbook, which offers focused reading and various learning activities.

Additional learning materials include: a brief guide to the module, recommended articles reading from the peer-reviewed literature, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and suggested relevant websites.

Student support is available from the module tutors through the online discussion forums and regularly scheduled 1hr ‘live-chat’ sessions on specific topics. Module tutors provide asynchronous feedback for all students on the online discussion forums and offer individual feedback on a formative (non-assessed) assignment submitted by the student.

**Assessment details**

Optional formative assignment.

Formal assessment of this module is by a two hour-15 minute unseen written examination (100%). Students are advised to spend the first 15 minutes reading the paper and planning responses.

If students fail the examination they are allowed one further attempt.

**Assessment dates**

Assignments for this module can be submitted only once annually, no later than 31 March and must be submitted via the online Assignment Management System.

Unseen written examinations for DL modules are held once a year, in June (including re-sits). Examinations are normally taken in a student's country of residence, in one of over 650 examination centres worldwide (arranged mainly through Ministries of Education or the British Council). A list of examination centres can be found at [https://london.ac.uk/current-students/examinations/examination-centres](https://london.ac.uk/current-students/examinations/examination-centres).

A local fee will be payable direct to the examination centre. This fee is in addition to the programme/module fee and is set by, and paid directly to, the individual examination centres. The level of local examination centre fees varies across the world and neither the University of London nor the LSHTM have any control over the fee amount.

**Language of study and assessment**

English (please see ‘English language requirements’ below regarding the standard required for entry).

**TIMING AND MODE OF STUDY**

**Duration**

Distance learning module studies begin in early October. The textbook that supports the module will be dispatched to registered students in early autumn once fees have been paid. All other module materials will be made available on Moodle. Students may start their studies at any time from the beginning of October and work through the material until the start of the June examinations (although assessment submission deadlines which are earlier than this must be observed).

**Dates**

Tutorial support for distance learning modules is available only from the beginning of October through to the end of May.

**Mode of study**

By distance learning.

**Learning time**

The notional learning time for the module totals 100 hours, consisting of:

- Directed self-study (reading and working through the provided module material) and self-directed learning (general reading around the subject, library, Moodle discussion forums) ≈ 70 hours
- Assessment, review and revision ≈ 30 hours.
### Pre-requisites
Those wishing to study this module must have regular access to the internet and should register on the LSHTM Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle). The Module Organisers and tutors use Moodle as their primary means of communication with students and use it to make available a range of materials for studying the module. Students are also encouraged to participate in module-specific discussions on Moodle; make use of the online library facilities and will be required to submit assignments via an on-line assignment management system.

### English language requirements
A strong command of the English language is necessary to benefit from studying the module. Applicants whose first language is not English or whose prior university studies have not been conducted wholly in English must fulfil LSHTM’s English language requirements, with an acceptable score in an approved test taken in the two years prior to entry. Applicants may be asked to take a test even if the standard conditions have been met.

### Student numbers
There is no cap on the number of students who can register for this distance learning module. The number of students actively studying this module varies, but typically approximately 400 students register for the module per year.

### Student selection
This module is available to be studied by students on the following distance learning programmes: MSc / PGDip / PGCert Public Health. Alternatively, students may register for this as an “individual module”. This module is also open to LSHTM research degree students.

### Fees
The current schedule of fees can be viewed at [https://london.ac.uk/applications/costs-your-course/course-fees](https://london.ac.uk/applications/costs-your-course/course-fees) (click on the Postgraduate Fees link).

### Scholarships
Scholarships are not available for individual modules. Some potential sources of funding are detailed on the LSHTM website.

### Admission deadlines
Applications for LSHTM distance learning programmes and modules are managed by the University of London. To apply to take either a formal award (i.e. PG Certificate, PG Diploma or MSc) or an individual module, see [https://london.ac.uk/courses/public-health](https://london.ac.uk/courses/public-health).

Key deadlines are as follows:
- Application deadline: 31 August
- Registration deadline: 30 September (new students and those registering for the project module, PHM305)
- Registration deadline: 31 October (continuing students, with the exception of those registering for the project module PHM305, and those taking individual modules).

**Please note:** The academic year starts 1 October. Students who register after 1 October should note that module welcome and Collaborate sessions held in October are recorded, but they cannot request an extension to assignment submission deadlines or apply for an examination extenuating circumstance as a result of registering later than 1 October.

(In-house LSHTM research students wishing to study this module should self-enrol on the module's Moodle area.)