MODULE SPECIFICATION

Academic Year	2026-27
Module Code	PHM104
Module Title	Principles of Social Research
Module Organiser(s)	Leslie Kelly
Contact email	For students studying University of London awards (initial registration 2025/2026 and prior years): Enquiries may be made via their Student Advice Centre at: Student Advice Centre. For students studying LSHTM awards (registration in 2026/2027 and onwards): Enquiries should be emailed to: PHsupport@lshtm.ac.uk
Faculty	Public Health & Policy
FHEQ Level	Level 7
Credit Value	**CATS:** 10 **ECTS:** 5
Mode of Delivery	Distance Learning
Mode of Study	Directed self-study, through online materials (Virtual Learning Environment)
Language of Study	English
Pre-Requisites	None
Accreditation by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body	None
Module Cap (Maximum number of students)	None
Target Audience	Compulsory module for all students on the Distance Learning MSc / PGDip and PGCert Public Health programmes. Alternatively, it can also be taken as an individual module.
Module Description	This module provides students the knowledge of the basic principles of social research practice and theory as applied to health.
Duration	Studies for distance learning modules begin in early October. At this time, module materials will be made available on Moodle once fees have been paid. Students may start their studies at any time from the beginning of October and work through the material until the start of the June assessments.

	However, students are encouraged to commence their studies in October and work steadily through the materials over the course of the academic year and must adhere to other assessment submission deadlines.
Last Revised (e.g. year changes approved)	May 2026

For students studying UoL awards (initial registration in 2025/2026 and prior years)

Programme(s) This module is linked to the following programme(s)	**Status**
PGCert and PGDip Public Health (Distance Learning - University of London Worldwide)	Compulsory
MSc Public Health (General Stream) (Distance Learning - University of London Worldwide)	Compulsory
MSc Public Health: Environment and Health (Distance Learning - University of London Worldwide)	Compulsory
MSc Public Health: Health Promotion (Distance Learning - University of London Worldwide)	Compulsory
MSc Public Health: Health Services Management (Distance Learning - University of London Worldwide)	Compulsory
MSc Public Health: Health Economics (Distance Learning - University of London Worldwide)	Compulsory

For students studying LSHTM awards (registration in 2026/2027 and onwards)

Programme(s) This module is linked to the following programme(s)	**Status**
PGCert Public Health (Distance Learning)	Compulsory
PGDip Public Health (Distance Learning)	Compulsory
MSc Public Health (Distance Learning)	Compulsory

Module Aim and Intended Learning Outcomes

Overall aim of the module
The overall module aim is to: • Improve students' ability to describe and apply basic principles of social research practice and theory to health.

Module Intended Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of the module a student should be able to: 1. Distinguish various social science research methods and explain how they contribute to public health and health services; 2. Critically analyse the strengths and weaknesses of different study designs, including experimental, cross-sectional, observational, documentary approaches, and participatory research designs and corresponding research ethics; 3. Describe the main methods used in qualitative research, including core characteristics of qualitative studies; formulation of research questions; data collection; and data analytic approaches; 4. Describe key aspects of quantitative research, including sampling strategies, questionnaire design, measurement and scale development, psychometric properties (validity and reliability); and 5. Explain the complementary roles of different methods in health research, including the benefits and potential challenges of working across disciplines.

Indicative Syllabus

Session Content
The module is expected to cover the following topics: • A broad introduction to key concepts in qualitative and quantitative methodology and the main data collection methods used in social research for health, including perspectives from some of the social science disciplines that have contributed to public health, including psychology, sociology, medical anthropology and history of medicine.

Teaching and Learning

Notional Learning Hours

Type of Learning Time	Number of Hours	Expressed as Percentage (%)
Directed self-study	70	70
Self-directed learning	0	0
Assessment, review and revision	30	30
Total	**100**	**100**

Teaching and Learning Strategy
Learning is via directed self-study. A guide to studying the module is provided, together with access to a range of study resources, discussion forums and online webinar discussion sessions. The textbook that supports this module provides a detailed set of learning objectives at the start of each chapter and also offers focused reading and various learning activities. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in the module-specific discussions and online webinar discussion sessions to obtain tutor support, and to make

Teaching and Learning Strategy
use of the LSHTM on-line library resources. Written feedback is provided on submitted assignments. Student support is available from the module tutors through the online discussion forums and regularly scheduled 1-hour '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

Assessment Strategy
A formative assessment (FA) is offered to encourage students to test their new knowledge and receive individual feedback. The formative assessment is optional and will not count towards a student's final grade. The FA deadline is 31 March. The summative assessment of this module is by a time-limited assessment (100%).

Summative assessment

Assessment Type	Assessment Length	Weighting (%)	Intended Module Learning Outcomes Tested
Time-limited assessment	TBC	100	All

Time-limited assessments for DL modules are held once a year, mostly in June (including resits), and will be held online for 2026-27.

For students studying UoL awards (initial registration in 2025/2026 and prior years)
Assessments are held in accordance with University of London's annual guidance.

For students studying LSHTM awards (registration in 2026/2027 and onwards)

Assessments are held in accordance with Chapter 8b of the LSHTM Academic Manual.

Resitting assessment
Resits will accord with Chapter 8b of the LSHTM Academic Manual. The Resit assessment will be the same assessment type as the first attempt (see previous table).

Resources

The following materials are provided to students after registration and fee payment for this module in October:

- A brief guide to studying the module;
- The textbook *Principles of Social Research* (2nd edition) by Mary Alison Durand and Tracey Chantler;
- 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 those listed above; participate in module-specific discussion forums and online webinar discussion sessions and access the LSHTM online library resources.

All materials are provided in e-format and may be accessed via the LSHTM VLE – Moodle.

Teaching for Disabilities and Learning Differences

The module-specific site on Moodle provides students with access to the majority of the module learning materials, including a study guide and online reading list (detailing both essential and recommended readings), and additional resources including supplementary exercises, the option to listen to recordings of selected lectures taking place in London. In this module, materials provided include a textbook that is made available to students in e-format. All materials posted up on Moodle areas, including computer-based sessions, have been made accessible where possible. The LSHTM Moodle has been made accessible to the widest possible audience, using a VLE that allows for up to 300% zoom, permits navigation via keyboard and use of speech recognition software, and that allows listening through a screen reader. All students have access to "SensusAccess" software which allows conversion of files into alternative formats.

For students studying University of London awards (initial registration 2025/2026 and prior years): For students with special needs, reasonable adjustments and support can be arranged – details and how to request support can be found on the University of London Worldwide website at: Inclusive practice and Access arrangements | University of London
For students studying LSHTM awards (registration 2026/2027 and onwards): For students who require learning or assessment adjustments and support this can be arranged through the Student Support Services – details and how to request support can be found on the LSHTM Disability Support pages.