MODULE SPECIFICATION

Academic Year	2026-27
Module Code	PHM305
Module Title	Project report option
Module Organiser(s)	Sarah Smith and Henning Tarp Jensen
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:** 45 **ECTS:** 22.5
Mode of Delivery	Distance Learning
Mode of Study	Self-study, through the online Virtual Learning Environment
Language of Study	English
Pre-Requisites	Students registered for the MSc Public Health by distance learning programme should have completed all the core modules and also the Foundation Information Skills submodule offered via the Library. Feedback from past project students has mentioned that taking more than 2-3 electives on top of the project can be difficult. This module should only be taken by students in their final year of study. Students who want to study this module must have regular access to the internet as the materials for this module are provided online and tutorial support is provided through web-based discussions and email. Those wishing to study this module must register on the LSHTM Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle). The Module Organisers and supervisors 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 use the discussion forums on Moodle for peer support to each other. All students thinking of registering for PHM305 should utilise the tile on the PHM Student Zone: 'PHM305 Project Module (Prospective Students)', subscribing to the discussion forum by 15 June. Guidance is provided here for Public Health-registered students considering undertaking the Project report option module. Students who are planning complex statistical analysis should have prior research experience in conducting statistical analysis and/or have completed EPM202 Statistical Methods in Epidemiology. EPM202 students get access to EPM103 materials which could be useful to those who also undertake the Project report option module. However, students will need to download EPM103 CAL sessions when registered on EPM202 as these are not available once EPM202 is completed. Please be aware that the LSHTM staff mostly use Stata for statistical analyses and so are generally unable to help in providing guidance on conducting analyses using other statistical packages or interpreting their output.
Accreditation by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body	None
Module Cap (Maximum number of students)	None
Target Audience	This module is available only to those registered for the MSc Public Health by distance learning.
Module Description	This module provides students with an opportunity to develop independent research abilities in relation to a chosen research question by integrating, synthesising and further developing the skills previously gained in their MSc.
Duration	The Project Report option module runs, from 1 October to 30 September (but students are requested to engage in preparatory work from 15 June and register for PHM305 by 30 September). Students are expected to submit their project proposal and complete the report in the same academic year. Alternatively, students may opt to complete a project report over the course of two years instead of one, split at any stage, with the submission of the Final Project Report due by 30 September in the year the student wishes it to be assessed. Students are not entitled to any additional supervisory support if spreading the project over two years instead of one year (i.e. the supervisory support given over two years

	must add up to no more than the equivalent of one year). Supervisory and other staff support cannot continue beyond the second year of Project report option module registration. This means that students have a maximum of two consecutive years to complete the Project report option module. **Key deadlines 2026-27:** • 15 June 2026: subscribed to the discussion forum on the 'PHM305 Project Module (Prospective Students)' tile of PHM Student Zone • 30 September 2026: registered on PHM305 • 1 November 2026: submitted a Project Proposal • 30 September 2027: submitted Final Project Report for assessment
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**
MSc Public Health: General (Distance Learning - University of London Worldwide)	Elective
MSc Public Health: Environment and Health (Distance Learning - University of London Worldwide)	Elective
MSc Public Health: Health Promotion (Distance Learning - University of London Worldwide)	Elective
MSc Public Health: Health Service Management (Distance Learning - University of London Worldwide)	Elective
MSc Public Health: Health Economics (Distance Learning - University of London Worldwide)	Elective

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

Programme(s) This module is linked to the following programme(s)	**Status**
PGDip Public Health	Elective
MSc Public Health	Elective

Module Aim and Intended Learning Outcomes

Overall aim of the module
The overall module aim is to: • enable students to work on a real public health issue, and to integrate and deepen their understanding of public health concepts and skills learned during the MSc programme.

Module Intended Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of the module a student should be able to: 1. Demonstrate independent research skills including the ability to think critically; conduct a high-quality literature review; develop research questions, hypotheses and research plan; navigate fundamental aspects of research (e.g., intellectual property, data protection and ethical issues); 2. Apply public health research skills, including methodological, theoretical and analytical approaches, to a real-world problem, based on knowledge gained throughout the MSc; 3. Demonstrate familiarity with the conventional research-reporting style, including project layout and referencing and writing a scientific report according to prescribed standards (i.e. introduction, synthesis of background literature, methodology, results, discussion, recommendations and conclusion); 4. Critically reflect on social power hierarchies and other social justice or ethical issues in health-related research; 5. Demonstrate the ability to present, interpret and critically discuss research findings in relation to other studies including reflecting on methodological approach, and make recommendations in a clear and systematic format.

Indicative Syllabus

Session Content
Student research projects must be one of the following types: ***a) Literature Review using a systematic approach*** While all projects involve conducting a certain level of literature review, focussing exclusively on existing literature and reviewing this using a systematic approach helps students to develop the skills needed to systematically search, obtain, analyse, synthesise and draw conclusions on available evidence for public health. To undertake a literature review, you must have good access to library and public health journal resources. ***b) Quantitative research*** For analyses of existing quantitative data, students must have access to the proposed data and the capacity, experience and resources to undertake this type of analysis, e.g. good data and ability to use appropriate software. Principal sources of data are likely to be population or patient data, or secondary financial or activity data from health services authorities or providers. It is recommended that students use Stata for quantitative analysis. Although students are generally dissuaded from conducting primary quantitative research,

Session Content
such as surveys, for their projects, they may consider this type of project, but must contact the Project Module Organisers before preparing their proposal. This is to ensure that their proposed research is feasible in the timeframe for the module and to confirm that they have the necessary skills and resources to conduct the research. ***c) Qualitative research*** For qualitative research, students should have a good understanding of social science methods, safe access to potential participants, an understanding of the ethical issues, and an ability to draft a proposal outlining methods used for qualitative research and analysis. Students can also undertake a secondary analysis of a qualitative dataset. ***d) A combination of above methods*** Students may elect to use a combination of two of the above methods, but reduce the scope of each, showing awareness of the amount of research and analysis these will take.

Teaching and Learning

Notional Learning Hours

Type of Learning Time	Number of Hours	Expressed as Percentage (%)
Directed self-study	50	11
Self-directed learning	300	67
Assessment, review and revision	100	22
Total	**450**	**100**

Teaching and Learning Strategy

Learning is self-directed against a set of learning objectives, using the Project Student Guidelines. Electronic documents are available via the student Moodle site. Supervisors provide feedback on the Proposal, the CARE form, the draft Methods Section, and one Draft Report, and also respond to specific academic queries. Zoom/Skype/video calls with supervisors are expected at Proposal, Methods Section, data collection/analysis and Draft Report stages.

Student support is available from a project supervisor and the Project Module Organisers via email, online webinar discussion sessions and through the Moodle discussion forums. A group of past students who successfully completed PHM305 take on the role of 'Alumni Mentor' in responding to discussion forum posts and joining online webinar discussion sessions. They share their own experiences at each stage of the project, which complements advice from PMOs and is highly valued by students.

Students are expected to participate in the Moodle discussion forums, online webinar discussion sessions and Zoom/Skype/video calls, and make use of the online resources/materials, since engagement in these activities is likely to enhance their project experience and potentially their final grade.

There are 4 compulsory training/development components to PHM305:
(i) Online workshop on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), decolonising and intersecting power hierarchy issues in the context of MSc projects,
(ii) Intermediate Information Skills mini module training from the Library,
(iii) LSHTM Online Research Ethics training, and
(iv) Academic Integrity, Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism e-book.
These are compulsory as considered essential learning for undertaking research.

It is also a requirement to submit work for review and feedback from supervisors at different stages in the project process as well as submitting the Final Project Report.

The role of the project supervisor is to guide students in carrying out their project. However, ultimate responsibility for the project report rests with the student, and not the supervisor.

Assessment

Assessment Strategy
Students will be assessed on a written report of up to 10,000 words (with various additional required appendices such as ethics documentation and the reflective element outlined below). The Final Project Report is submitted through the online Assignment Management System (AMS), in electronic form. For the Project Report grade to be confirmed and released, each student first registering onto PHM305 in 2024-25 or any later year must have included a reflective element (written paragraph(s), short video, audio file or poster) as a separate appendix file submitted with their Final Project Report. The reflective element must discuss the social power hierarchy issues inherent to the student's project subject, methodology or discipline. Students will be provided with prompt questions for the types of issues they could consider in the reflective element. Students will need to provide evidence in their reflective element that they have considered one or more of these prompts (or suitable alternatives) in relation to their own individual project. Students who first registered for PHM305 in 2023-24 or earlier will not be required to include a reflective element but advised to do so. In addition, inclusive and culturally sensitive terminology throughout the Project Report is required for students first registering onto PHM305 in 2025-26 or any later year. Projects will be marked on merit in line with project marking guidelines and the LSHTM grade criteria (sentences will be added to the marking guidelines and feedback form to alert markers to bear in mind the new requirement of inclusive and culturally sensitive terminology). Issues relating to the use of terminology will not result in an automatic grade drop but will inevitably impact on the overall quality of the assessment and as such may affect the final grade. We will ask markers to flag projects where the lack of use of inclusive and culturally sensitive terminology was identified as an issue. Project Reports gaining a pass, but that are flagged by markers in this way, will not be released into the Library unless students undertake requested revisions (which PMOs will check prior to release to the Library, referring to PD / TPD if there is anything contentious). The Final Project Report should be submitted for marking no later than 30 September in the year the student wishes it to be assessed. Students who do not submit a Final Project Report by the project deadline (30 September) of their second consecutive year and who are not granted extenuating circumstances, will be awarded a 0 (non-submission) grade. They will be considered to have failed the project at the first attempt and allowed one further attempt at the project.

Summative assessment

Assessment Type	Assessment Length	Weighting (%)	Intended Module Learning Outcomes Tested
Project	10,000 words	100%	All

Resitting assessment
Resits will accord with Chapter 8b of the LSHTM Academic Manual. For students who are required to re-sit, there are three types of resit which the Board of Examiners can require students to undertake: (i) '**Revise and re-submit'**: In such cases, the re-sit student will need to make corrections and submit a revised project by an agreed deadline. (ii) '**Further data collection**': In such cases the student will be requested to collect or generate new data and revise/update the project, while keeping the initial project topic. Submission should be by the following year's deadline. (iii) '**New project**': In such cases, the re-sit student will need to re-register and do a project on an entirely new topic, for submission by the following year's deadline.

Resources

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

- DL Public Health Project Student Guidelines;
- Project Module Introduction and Welcome;
- Resources on literature searching and critical appraisal;
- For those doing quantitative analysis: resources on the management of data, and using Stata and EpiDATA;
- For those doing qualitative research: resources on conducting focus groups and interviews;
- Resources on referencing and how to avoid plagiarism;
- Resources (including PowerPoint slides, Panopto video recordings and recorded online webinar discussion sessions) on completing key stages in project process: Proposal, Combined Academic, Risk assessment and Ethics approval (CARE) form, Methods Section, and Draft Report;
- Good examples of written work completed by past DL Public Health Project Students at each key stage, including Final Reports submitted for assessment;
- Textbooks (e-books) as highly recommended reading: 1. *Doing a Literature Review in Health and Social Care: A Practical Guide* (fourth edition) by Helen Aveyard. 2. *Introduction to Project Management in Health Research* by Tim Usherwood. 3. *Writing and Presenting Research* by Angela Thody. 4. *Doing your Research Project: A Guide for First Time Researchers by* Judith Bell and Stephen Waters;
- In addition to the above, students can participate in module-specific discussion forums on Moodle and live online webinar discussion sessions, as well as being able to access the LSHTM online library resources;
- A Zoom/Skype/video call can be arranged with Project Module Organisers after registration to discuss project ideas and to address any queries about the module;
- On completion of library mini modules to help students conduct an effective, systematic literature search, library staff are available for a one-to-one Zoom call if needed.

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.