



MODULE SPECIFICATION

Academic Year (student cohort covered by specification)	2026-27
Module Code	1701
Module Title	Reviewing the Literature
Module Organiser(s)	Matthew Egan and Min Hae Park
Faculty	Public Health & Policy
FHEQ Level	Level 7
Credit Value	CATS: 15 ECTS: 7.5
Term of Delivery	Term 2
Mode of Delivery	For 2026-27 it is intended that this module will be delivered predominantly through face-to-face sessions. Teaching will comprise a combination of live and interactive activities (synchronous learning) as well as self-directed study (asynchronous learning).
Mode of Study	Full time
Language of Study	English
Pre-Requisites	Students who wish to take this module are required to take one of the Library's sessions on using bibliographical databases. There is some overlap between appraising the literature in the module and material covered in Qualitative Methodologies (1700). There is also some overlap between using bibliographic databases in the module and some of the Library sessions on the use of bibliographic databases.
Accreditation by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body	None
Module Cap	60
Target Audience	This module is intended for students interested in health services/ systems and public health research in developed or developing countries.



Module Description	Students on this module learn how to conduct systematic reviews: including reviews of quantitative research evidence and reviews of qualitative research evidence. We examine the key elements involved in producing robust syntheses of research evidence, such as: • Learning how to conduct a systematic review, including - • Framing an appropriate review question • Literature searching • Data extraction and critical appraisal of evidence • Synthesis and write-up. For the module assessment, students design and conduct their own systematic review on a topic they select.
Duration	5 weeks at 2.5 days per week
Timetabling slot	C1
Last Revised (e.g. year changes approved)	August 2026

Programme	Status
Public Health	Recommended
Public Health for Global Practice	Recommended
Health Policy, Planning and Financing	Recommended
Public Health for Eye Care	Recommended

Module Aim and Intended Learning Outcomes

Overall aim of the module

The overall module aim is to:

- Describe and illustrate the methods available for identifying and reviewing quantitative and qualitative literature.

Module Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the module a student should be able to:

1. Carry out an appropriate, rigorous review of the literature
2. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of different methods of identifying, assessing and synthesising literature.

Indicative Syllabus

Session Content

The module is expected to cover the following topics:

- Planning the review: the role of the literature review and specification of the task
- Identification of relevant literature, both published and unpublished: developing a search strategy and using bibliographic databases
- Appraising the literature: methods for assessing the quality of quantitative and qualitative research
- Synthesising the evidence: integration of the evidence using both quantitative and qualitative methods; principles and practice of meta-analysis
- Writing the review

Teaching and Learning

Notional Learning Hours

Type of Learning Time	Number of Hours	Expressed as Percentage (%)
Contact time	27	18%
Directed self-study	18	12%
Self-directed learning	15	10%
Assessment, review and revision	90	60%
Total	150	100%

Student contact time refers to the tutor-mediated time allocated to teaching, provision of guidance and feedback to students. This time includes activities that take place in face-to-face contexts such as lectures, seminars, demonstrations, tutorials, supervised laboratory

workshops, practical classes, project supervision as well as where tutors are available for one-to-one discussions and interaction by email. Student contact time also includes tutor-mediated activities that take place in online environments, which may be synchronous (using real-time digital tools such as Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate Ultra) or asynchronous (using digital tools such as tutor-moderated discussion forums or blogs often delivered through the School's virtual learning environment, Moodle).

The division of notional learning hours listed above is indicative and is designed to inform students as to the relative split between interactive (online or on-campus) and self-directed study.

Teaching and Learning Strategy

The teaching and learning strategy is based on a combination of lectures as well as computer and non-computer practical sessions. In the practical sessions students have the opportunity to apply the concepts and methods covered in the lectures. The module is intended to provide students with "hands on" experience of conducting their own systematic review: a process that includes developing a review question, searching the literature, appraising the literature, extracting data, synthesising included studies and writing-up. We will teach and give students a chance to try out systematic review methods relevant to both reviews of quantitative and qualitative evidence. As the module progresses we will also provide opportunities for group discussions and one-to-one discussions of specific challenges students encounter as they work on their own review. The assessment task, submitted at the end of the module, is the student's own systematic review. They produce this as the module progresses – with the teaching content in each week sequenced to match the stages of the review they are producing. It is a 'learn as you go' approach.

Assessment

Assessment Strategy

Each student will submit a literature review of up to 2500 words (plus appendices) undertaken during the module. Students choose their own review question and will work on their review throughout the module supported by assessment seminars and individual advice sessions.

The assessment maps on to the intended learning outcomes by:

- Expecting students to develop their topic of interest into a review question and to plan and undertake an appropriate search for relevant studies;
- Allowing students to demonstrate their understanding of the methodological quality of the studies included in their review by undertaking critical appraisal;
- Providing an opportunity to draw together evidence on their question from included studies using appropriate methods of evidence synthesis;
- Encouraging students to reflect on the process of undertaking their review and assess the strengths and limitations of their review.

Summative Assessment

Assessment Type	Assessment Length	Weighting (%)	Intended Module Learning Outcomes Tested
Coursework	Up to 2500 (plus appendices)	100%	1-2

Resitting assessment

Resits will accord with [Chapter 8a](#) of the LSHTM Academic Manual

Assessment being replaced	Approved Alternative Assessment Type	Approved Alternative Assessment Length (i.e. Word Count, Length of presentation in minutes)
Literature review	Literature Review Protocol	2000 words



Resources

Indicative reading list

- Counsell C. Formulating questions and locating primary studies for inclusion in systematic reviews. *Ann Intern Med* 1997;127:380-387.
- Mays N, Pope C, Popay J. Systematically reviewing qualitative and quantitative evidence to inform management and policy-making in the health field. *J Health Serv Res Policy* 2005;10 (Suppl 1):S1:6-S1:20.
- Mulrow CD. Systematic reviews: Rationale for systematic reviews. *BMJ* 1994;309:597-599.
- Petticrew M. Systematic reviews from astronomy to zoology: Myths and misconceptions. *BMJ* 2001;322:98-101.
- Katikireddi SV, Egan M, Petticrew M. How do systematic reviews incorporate risk of bias assessments into the synthesis of evidence? A methodological study. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2014; doi:10.1136/jech-2014-204711.
- Thomas J, Harden A. Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 2008;8:45 doi:10.1186/1471-2288-8-45. (<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2288/8/45>).
- Britten N, Campbell R, Pope C, Donovan J, Morgan M, Pill R. Synthesis of qualitative research: A worked example using meta-ethnography. *J Health Serv Res Policy* 2002;7:209-215
- Guyatt GH, Oxman AD, Vist GE, Kunz R, Falck-Ytter Y, Alonso-Coello P, Schünemann HJ for the GRADE Working Group. GRADE: an emerging consensus on rating quality of evidence and strength of recommendations. *BMJ* 2008;336:924
- Hultcrantz M, Rind D, Akl EA, Treweek S, Mustafa RA, Iorio A, et al. The GRADE Working Group clarifies the construct of certainty of evidence. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 2017;87:4-13.
- Thomson H, Thomas S. The effect direction plot: visual display of non-standardised effects across multiple outcome domains. *Research Synthesis Methods* 2013;4(1);95-101. (doi:10.1002/jrsm.1060)
- Campbell et al. Improving Conduct and Reporting of Narrative Synthesis of Quantitative Data (ICONS-Quant): protocol for a mixed methods study to develop a reporting guideline. *BMJ Open* 2018;8:e020064. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2017-020064



Teaching for Disabilities and Learning Differences

The module-specific site on Moodle gives students access to lecture notes and copies of the slides used during the lecture. Where appropriate, lectures are recorded and made available on Moodle. All materials posted on Moodle, including computer-based sessions, have been made accessible where possible.

LSHTM Moodle is accessible to the widest possible audience, regardless of specific needs or disabilities. More detail can be found in the [Moodle Accessibility Statement](#) which can also be found within the footer of the Moodle pages. All students have access to “SensusAccess” software which allows conversion of files into alternative formats.

Student Support Services can arrange learning or assessment adjustments for students where needed. Details and how to request support can be found on the [LSHTM Disability Support pages](#).