

Degree Programme MSc in Public Health

Applicable to students starting after August 1st, 2016.

1. Introductory message for students from the Board of Studies

Dear students,

A degree programme sets out the fundamentals for your studies. It is therefore vital that you read and understand it. Along with course descriptions and the University's general rules and regulations, the degree programme is an important tool, which you should use. By doing so you will know your rights and your obligations.

The statutes of the Board of Studies stipulate that any proposed degree profiles and degree programmes must be submitted to the Board of Studies by the programme director once the programme director has heard from any parties consulted. Once a proposed degree programme has been discussed and it has been ascertained that any relevant parties have been heard, the Board of Studies will approve the degree programme and forward it to the Dean for further administration.

The Study Board shall ensure that all the components of the degree are interlinked and that individual subjects and subject areas are in line with the purpose of the degree. The Board also oversees that the teaching delivered along with any exam requirements are appropriate for the purpose of the degree:

This degree programme was approved by the Chair of the Board of Study on June 20th, 2019 and will be discussed at the next meeting of the Board of Study for final approval.

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3. Introduction

This document sets out the degree programme for the Master of Science in Public Health. As authorised by Parliamentary Act 58, dated June 9th, 2008, on the University of the Faroe Islands, as well as Executive Order No. 85, dated June 2009, this degree programme stipulates the contents of the degree and the rules by which the degree is delivered and completed. This programme complies with the Bologna Declaration on a common European education system and is structured based on that model. The degree programme does not include individual course descriptions, nor the general rules and regulations governing the University. These are available on the University of the Faroe Islands' website.

4. Overarching purpose of the degree

The MSc in Public Health is made up of 120 ECTS and its purpose is to equip social service and healthcare practitioners in the Faroe Islands with the skills and competences required for positions in the public health care and social services sectors, which require perspectives and reflection on public health, specialist knowledge and analytical skills at master degree level, including heads of department and other management positions. The degree also aims to develop students' competences enabling them to carry out research projects, or take part in large-scale research projects within the social and health sciences and the areas where they border on and interact with each other.

5. Entry requirements

As a prerequisite for enrolment applicants must have completed a medium-cycle qualification, such as bachelor or professional bachelor programmes in the fields of healthcare or social services/welfare services, for example as a nurse, social educator, midwife, social worker, teacher, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, social scientist, bioanalyst, and others. The programme director and dean will individually assess each application.

5.1 Other competences

In addition to the education qualifications required, students must also be able to read and understand texts in Faroese, English, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish. In addition, they must be able to write assignments, including a master thesis, in one of the languages mentioned.

5.2 Enrolment restrictions

Students will be enrolled every other year. A limited number of students will be enrolled on the programme. The number of students accepted will be decided every other year prior to acceptance and will be determined by the capacity available at the University of the Faroe Islands. At present the limit is 24 students in one class.

If there prove to be more student than spaces available on the programme, then applicants will be ranked. The ranking will be based on an basement of each individual applicant's capacity to complete the degree, including relevant continuing education and individual courses completed in, for example, scientific theory and methods or other relevant subjects; in addition to practical experience with projects and research. The programme director is responsible for this ranking.

6. Title conferred by the degree

Completing this master degree course entitles students to use the title Master of Science in Public Health, abbreviated as MSc in Public Health (in Faroese: Master í Fólkaheilsu, abbreviated as MSc í Fólkaheilsu).

7. Competences

Students who complete this degree programme will have acquired the following competences: this master degree in public health affords students in-depth knowledge of public health, methodology and health research, social issues and health, prevention and promoting health. Given that public health is an interdisciplinary field, it spans several scientific disciplines and this programme will emphasise the interplay between those scientific disciplines.

This master degree in public health is characterised by a joint foundation in the interdisciplinary field of public health science, which paired with electives enables students to tailor their own professional profile.

The interdisciplinary approach entails an emphasis on theoretical and methodological insights from several health and social sciences traditions. Another hallmark of this programme is the emphasis on the Faroe Islands as a 'small-scale society' in teaching.

7.1 Subject-specific and general competences

Successful students will have acquired the following subject-specific and general competences:

Subject-specific competences

- **Public health, interdisciplinary knowledge:** Knowledge of the background and thinking, which public health as an interdisciplinary field builds on; the ability to identify and define public health issues/challenges; as well as the ability to assess public health in a qualified manner.
- **Analytical skills:** Analyse and assess environmental impacts on health in society, in specific social groups and formulate ways to address and reach individuals and social groups with health measures.
- **Independent decision-making:** The ability to use research skills and scientific knowledge/data effectively; the ability to design, develop and assess development plans and research projects based on relevant methods and sound scientific argumentation.
- **Leadership and teamwork:** The ability to use specialist knowledge in public health to cooperate with individuals and in teams with colleagues/peers and other groups of practitioners on health promotion and prevention, and to develop their own professional field in relation to these.
- **Assessment and development:** The ability to soundly assess, define and deliver quality and safety in healthcare; to shape, implement and assess health policies and measures/programmes; to prepare, implement and assess prevention programmes/measures.

General competences

- **Academic method:** Working at a higher level, meaning the ability to independently problematize, discuss, analyse and interpret research questions within their own area of practice; assess and apply scientific theories and methods used in the field in order to generate new knowledge and findings.
- **Critical and self-critical skills:** Identify and formulate a problem-based research question, discuss the question by applying sound and appropriate scientific knowledge/data and methods, draw independent critical conclusions and take a lead in the area of practice.
- **Language skills:** Use precise language both orally and in writing; understand and use scientific terminology at master level, meaning also in English.
- **Communication skills:** Communicate in a register suited to the communication situation (informally, formally, scientifically), including communicating new knowledge orally and in writing; presenting to large groups as well as in smaller settings.
- **Teamwork:** The ability to work effectively as part of a group and a diverse team, applying problem-solving skills to research various hypothetical situations.
- **Working independently:** Organise compound elements, meaning to correlate the results of different studies and analyses and, based on this exercise, produce a synthesis while strictly adhering to subject and time limitations.

7.2 Learning outcomes

The successful student can demonstrate ability to:

- Apply public health science knowledge in practice at a higher level.
- Describe public health as a science-based interdisciplinary concept.
- Analyse the interplay between social issues and public health.
- Analyse key elements of and challenges in public health both in an international and national context.
- Analyse and assess international and national public health measures.
- Assess the findings of scientific studies of public health and prevention.
- Describe, assess and apply the scientific methods most commonly used in public health research.
- Assess the research findings of scientific studies in public health, which draw on epidemiological and statistical methods.
- Apply theories and methods at a higher level within their own professional field.
- Formulate and meticulously examine research-question-based methods independently at a higher level, and thereby producing independent work with academic and professional depth.
- Define research questions from several different angles, analyse and convey significant knowledge within their own discipline and subject area.
- Carry out interdisciplinary work based on research questions to a high professional standard.
- Work as part of a group, as well as lead such working groups.
- Present and convey research and research-based knowledge, and to discuss it both with peers and others without specialist knowledge.
- Based on the relevant professional area and the skills it confers, independently and on an interprofessional and interdisciplinary basis perform specialised and complex tasks in the public/health care sectors or in areas of public benefit, or in the private sector in relation to public health.

7.3 Employability and further education

This MSc in Public Health equips students to take up leading positions within the public health sector, including and in particular within local government and the public sector, as leaders of larger units or teams whether within clinical or coordinating/professional health care practice. This degree programme also prepares students to continue studies at PhD level (Third Cycle Programmes), in addition to further studies within management or specialist area degrees and courses.

8. Degree structure and contents

This degree in public health can be completed as a 2-year full-time programme or 4-year part-time programme. Each academic year is divided into two semesters equivalent to 30 ECTS full-time and 15 ECTS part-time. This means that there are 4 semesters on the full-time programme and 8 semesters on the part-time programme. As this degree was initially only offered as part-time study, the 8 part-time semesters are termed modules. Each module is usually arranged as 7.5 ECTS or 15 ECTS courses.

8.1 Structure

This programme is made up of two main components – coursework and a thesis, which means that students each semester will receive instruction in the academic discipline, in addition to independently writing a master thesis based on a research question.

Modules are offered either as required courses (modules 1,2,3,5) or electives (modules 4,6).

The final modules (7 and 8) are the master thesis write-up.

8.1.1 Required courses

In the first module students receive instruction in theory of science and research methods, and they will focus on enabling students to acquire in-depth knowledge about the theories underpinning quantitative and qualitative methods, and to design a draft project within their area of professional practice.

The second module is broad and spans public health science, social affairs, living conditions and health. It will emphasise perspectives on and measures of health and illness, as well as the interplay between human beings, health challenges and social conditions over time and its impact on public health.

Module 3 will look into public health research with a particular view to Faroese research. It will focus on broadening the knowledge about and understanding of research methodology, as well as equipping students to carry out statistical analysis of minor volumes of data. In addition to receiving instruction in concrete examples from research, students are also expected to develop an independent research protocol in public health using a relevant method.

Module 5 discusses the subject areas of health pedagogy, prevention and promotion. It will emphasise factors to be considered when aiming to influence and reinforce the health of individuals and groups, which may be at particular risk of illness, for example due to societal or environmental impacts, diet, exercise, other health behaviour etc.

8.1.2 Electives

The purpose of electives is to allow students to tailor their individual education profile to the extent that they wish to reinforce certain aspects of their skillset; for example within the area of professional or clinical practice in which they are employed; with methods they would like to employ to write their

thesis; or according to other interests that may reinforce precisely the specific education profile students wish to develop.

Master-level courses that have been offered at the Faculty of Health Sciences as electives related to this programme include: ‘Statistical analysis, basic course’, ‘Epidemiology’, ‘Qualitative methods in public health research’, Gerontology, ‘Immunology and autoimmune diseases’, ‘Neurodegenerative diseases’, ‘Mental health in societal context’.

Students can take courses offered by the University of the Faroe Islands’ Faculty of Health Sciences, but also other faculties, to the extent that the programme director deems them a suitable complement to the degree programme. Pre-approval for taking courses at other faculties must be sought on a case-by-cases basis from the programme director and the Faculty of Health Sciences’ Board of Studies.

8.1.3 Writing the thesis

The purpose of the thesis is to allow students to develop and demonstrate an ability to independently apply theories and methods acquired on the master programme in public health. Students are tasked with selecting and investigating a research question in public health, which is of relevance to the field and to society.

The degree programme is structured as follows:

Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5.	Module 6	Modules 7 /8
Basic Course in Theory of Science and Research Methodology 15 ECTS	Public health, society and culture 15 ECTS	Pedagogy in health promotion and prevention 15 ECTS	Electives 15 ECTS	Health research 15 ECTS	Electives 15 ECTS	Master thesis 30 ECTS

8.2 Contents of the degree

The academic contents of the programme is described in detail in the course descriptions and course reading lists available on the University of the Faroe Islands’ website. Course descriptions contain information about: course numbers, titles, ECTS credits, prerequisites, level, purpose of the course, contents, learning and teaching approaches, learning outcomes, assessment methods, examination, marking scale, course bibliography and course contact person. Course bibliographies are circulated along with the course plan for each course and contain information about which books, articles and other works will be used as part of teaching.

Teaching may include lectures, discussions, group work, exercises, take-home assignments and project work and is set out in the course description for each course. Below you will find a description of the contents of this degree programme in summarised statements of purpose intended for guidance only.

8.2.1 Basic Course in theory of science and research methodology

The purpose of this course is for students to acquire insight into and knowledge about the different scientific disciplines, as well as an understanding of the significance of any approaches selected in relation to public health research, and that they acquire knowledge about and the ability to work with qualitative and quantitative methods in public health at master level. Overall, students will learn to apply this knowledge and skills to develop independent proposals for public health studies research protocols drawing on appropriate methodologies.

8.2.2 Public health, society and culture

The purpose of this course is for students to acquire broad knowledge about public health, health policies, as well as the social and cultural context in the Faroe Islands. The course will particularly emphasise the concept 'public health' from a historical perspective, as well as the demographic development of the Faroe Islands; the Faroe Islands as a welfare society, and health policy, legislation and culture in relation to health; all centred on the Faroe Islands as a 'small scale society'.

8.2.3 Health research

The purpose of this course is for students to acquire science-based knowledge about Faroese research in public health and to develop their abilities to assess and formulate proposals for new research projects. Students will receive instruction in different types of health research projects, how these are organised, ethical considerations in health research, as well as in how to apply statistical analysis to their work with data material and to draw conclusions.

8.2.4 Pedagogy in health promotion and prevention

The purpose of this course is for students to acquire science-based knowledge about and the ability to, from a health education perspective, analyse factors that have a bearing on health and health behaviour. Based on theories underpinning pedagogy in health promotion and prevention, students will learn to design proposals for health promotion and disease prevention measures, as well as to analyse health issues from a contextual perspective.

8.2.5 Elective: Statistical analysis, basic course

The purpose of this course is for students to acquire knowledge about the core elements of statistics as a method in public health research, as well as the ability to analyse statistics. Students will also be taught how to differentiate and apply descriptive and analytical statistics, how to develop their practical skills in applying statistics as a method with a view to research projects within their own area of interest/professional field, and how to assess statistical analyses in scientific work.

8.2.6 Elective: Epidemiology

The purpose of this course is for students to acquire knowledge about the core elements of epidemiology, as well as the ability to analyse issues in epidemiology. Furthermore, the course enables students to develop their ability to critically read and assess scientific epidemiological texts and to apply epidemiology as a method in research projects within their own area of interest/professional field.

8.2.7 Elective: Qualitative methods in public health research

The purpose of this course is for students to learn to comprehend the significance of theories of science as a basis for selection of qualitative methods; to develop their ability to work with qualitative methods in health science at master level; to assess scientific papers drawing on qualitative methods; and to write a review on a topic of their own choice in public health science.

8.2.8 Elective: Gerontology

The purpose of this course is for students to acquire science-based knowledge about and the ability to analyse key issues in gerontology, the ability to design health promotion and prevention measures for older people, and to acquire tools enabling them to further professional practice in this field in the Faroe Islands.

8.2.9 Elective: Immunology and autoimmune diseases

The purpose of this course is for students to acquire a foundation in the immune system and autoimmune diseases enabling them to assess and discuss the impacts on public health and quality of life of such conditions. Within a broader context, it should enable students to assess and draw on sound sources of knowledge about immunology and autoimmune diseases.

8.2.10 Elective: Neurodegenerative diseases

The purpose of this course is for students to acquire a foundation in neurodegenerative diseases with a particular emphasis on dementia, Parkinson's disease and sclerosis. In addition, the course will enable students to develop their ability to assess and discuss the impacts on public health and quality of life generated by such conditions. Students will be equipped to draw on and assess sound sources of knowledge about neurodegenerative diseases.

8.2.11 Elective: Mental health in a societal context

The purpose of this elective is for students to acquire science-based knowledge about and the ability to discuss research questions on mental health in a societal context. In addition, the course will enable students to acquire relevant and appropriate knowledge about science-based tools to further professional practice in the field of mental health in the Faroe Islands, and the ability to design health promotion and prevention measures related to mental health for local society.

8.2.12 Master thesis

The purpose of the master thesis is to enable students to synthesize what they have learned on the programme, to document their abilities to analyse and further their own area of practice, and to implement a research project. Students are expected to independently organise a research-problem based study drawing on academic concepts and theories, obtain empirical material, carry out an

independent analysis of this material and reach a conclusion, which clearly answers the research question defined for the study.

Students may choose to either write up a regular thesis or to produce a scientific article.

The thesis may be written individually or in groups. Each student will be examined individually on the master thesis, regardless of whether the thesis was co-written by a group.

The condition for examination in the master thesis is that the student has already successfully completed all other courses on the degree programme (90 ECTS).

9. Schedule for the master degree in public health

9.1 Schedule for part-time studies

Semester	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	ECTS
Coursework and thesis									
Theory of science and research methodology	X								15
Public health, society and culture		X							15
Health research			X						15
Elective				X					15*
Pedagogy in health prevention and promotion					X				15
Elective						X			15*
Master thesis							X	X	30
<i>Total ECTS</i>									120

* or multiples of courses each worth 5 ECTS, 7.5 ECTS, 10 ECTS

9.2 Schedule for full-time studies

Semester	1	2	3	4	ECTS
Coursework and thesis					
Theory of science and research methodology	X				15
Public health, society and culture		X			15
Health research	X				15
Elective		X			15*
Pedagogy in health prevention and promotion			X		15
Elective			X		15*
Master thesis				X	30
<i>Total ECTS</i>					120

* or multiples of courses each worth 5 ECTS, 7.5 ECTS, 10 ECTS

10. Examination and study progression

Once students are accepted on the degree programme, they must fill-in an enrolment form and submit it to the Student Services Centre. This enrolment simultaneously registers the student for all examinations scheduled on the degree programme, except for electives. Before the start of semesters with electives, students must choose electives and register for their selected course at the faculty office. When you register for electives you are automatically also registered for examination in that elective.

When students who have been on leave resume their studies, they must immediately register for the courses they have to take at the faculty office.

Examinations are held separately for each course and are arranged using one of the examination

methods listed below or as a combination of these:

- a) examination assignment with guidance
- b) oral examination
- c) written examination
- d) oral presentation, which counts towards a combined final mark
- e) written submission (e.g. take-home assignments, essays, or synopses), which counts towards a combined final mark
- f) oral examination based on a submitted thesis
- g) assessment of thesis

10.1 Marking scale

Marks are awarded for examinations according to the 7-point marking scale, or as “pass/fail”. The minimum mark for passing is the examination mark 02. The following marks can be awarded:

12: for excellent performance

Awarded for performances, which faultlessly or practically faultlessly meet the objectives of the subject.

10: for very good performance

Awarded for very good performances, which with only minor weaknesses meet most of the objectives in the subject curriculum.

7: for good performance.

Awarded for good performances, which with some weaknesses firmly meet the objectives in the subject curriculum.

4: for fair performance.

Awarded for fair performances, which have several major weaknesses and do not firmly meet the objectives in the subject curriculum.

02: for adequate performance.

Awarded for adequate performances, which barely reach the minimum standard to satisfy the objectives in the subject curriculum.

00: for inadequate performance.

Awarded for inadequate performances, which fail to meet the minimum standards to satisfy the objectives in the subject curriculum.

-3: for very poor performance.

Awarded for very poor performances, which are wholly unacceptable.

10.2 Exam assessment

Exams may be assessed by external or internal examiners. When examinations are externally assessed

exam performances are assessed by the teacher and an examiner, who is not employed by the University of the Faroe Islands. External examiners must be approved by the Faroese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Culture. When examinations are internally assessed exam performances are assessed by the teacher and another member of faculty of the University of the Faroe Islands.

10.3 Examination language

Faroese is the language of examination. However, other Scandinavian languages or the English language may be used during examinations if a student, internal or external examiner do not understand Faroese. In such cases the programme director will determine the examination language.

10.4 Reexaminations and deferring examination due to illness

Students may attempt examination up to three times on the same course. If a student does not pass a course on the first attempt, they may take two reexaminations. The dean may authorise exceptions to this rule based on a written application, provided that special circumstances warrant such an exception. If a student falls ill and cannot take an examination they may defer that examination. In order to defer an examination students must produce a doctor's certificate. Examinations deferred owing to illness are not counted as reexaminations.¹ Students who fail to pass one of the required courses on the programme after three attempts will not be allowed to complete the degree programme.

10.5 Withdrawing from examination

In order to be considered active, students must take examinations at the earliest opportunity. Students may withdraw from examination. This must be done as soon as possible and in all cases before the examination period begins. Students who do not withdraw from an examination before this deadline and fail to attend an examination are registered as having 'failed', and this examination will count towards their three examination attempts. Students may withdraw from examination by e-mailing the Faculty for Health Sciences' office.

10.6 Group work

Parts of this degree may feature group work, however, there are some courses that must be completed individually. The rule for any group assignment is that if a student leaves the group or the group splits in two, then everyone in the original group is equally entitled to use any materials produced in the group.

11. Credit transfer

Students who have already successfully completed courses at other universities, which are at the same or higher academic level and feature the same academic contents, and/or can be considered to generally complement the degree programme may apply to have credit for such courses transferred as

¹ Further information about reexaminations and deferrals owing to illness are available in: Executive Order on Transitory Regulations for Students at the University of the Faroe Islands having Commenced Studies before August 1st, 2008, and Regulations on General Examination Course in Faroese, No. 85, dated June 9th, 2009. Refer to Chapter 5, articles 31-33.

part of their degree programme at the University of the Faroe Islands. Applications for credit transfer must be submitted to the programme director who will assess whether courses from other education institutions may count towards the master programme in public health and then forward the application to the chair of the Board of Studies at the Faculty of Health Sciences. The Board of Studies will make the final decisions on whether credit may be transferred.

Applications may be submitted at any point during the year. However, any application to transfer credit for a specific course must be received by the programme director no later than 2 months before the course is due to start. Students who wish to have their applications processed before the beginning of a semester must meet the following deadlines:

- Spring term deadline: October 1st
- Winter term deadline: January 10th

Further information about credit transfers, procedures and forms are available on the University's website.

12. Studying abroad

Students may complete parts of the degree programme at another university as exchange students equivalent to the electives on the programme (30 ECTS), or to the extent assessed by the programme director and approved by the Board of Studies that courses at another university may substitute required courses on the degree programme. Students are required to apply to the Board of Studies for pre-approval of credit transfer before travelling abroad to study.

13. Appeals

Appeals against decisions made in relation to examinations must be submitted to the dean in writing and must contain the grounds for appeal. The time limit for appeals is no more than 2 weeks after students have been notified of the appealed decision. Further information about appeals procedures are available on the University's website.

14. Other guidelines

14.1 Leave

Applications for leave must be submitted to the Faculty of Health Sciences office. Any disputes regarding leave will be referred to the student counsellor at the Faculty of Health Sciences.

14.2 Withdrawal

If a student should choose to withdraw from their studies, they must contact the Faculty of Health Sciences office and fill in a withdrawal form. Please note that any student who subsequently wishes to resume studies will have to reapply on equal footing with other applicants.

14.3 Communication

Communication with students must to the greatest degree possible be carried out via information technology (e.g. e-mail, website, Moodle).

The master thesis must be submitted to the faculty office both in digital format and as three separate hard copies.

14.4 ECTS and workloads

ECTS are a unit of measure of the volume of a course and the associated student workload. ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) is a joint system, which makes it easier to transfer credit for work carried out between countries and degrees. ECTS are calculated as follows:

- 1 ECTS is equivalent to 30 hours of work for students – all included (preparation + teaching + exercises and examination).

Most courses are 15 ECTS, which is equivalent to 450 hours of student work for each course. Full-time students have to complete 30 ECTS each semester and must therefore expect to put in approximately 900 hours of work per semester.

14.5 Academic year

The academic year starts in week 34 and ends in week 25. No teaching that is required for this degree programme, will take place outside this period. It is, however, common for summer courses, seminars and workshops to take place outside the formal academic year.

15. Terms and conditions for changes to the degree programme

The programme director may suggest changes to the degree programme, which require approval from the Dean and Board of Studies. The Board of Studies may also contact the programme director and suggest changes to the degree programme. Any changes will take effect at the beginning of the academic year.

If any major changes are made to the degree programme, students must be given the option to complete their studies in accordance with the degree programme, which was in place when they enrolled as students at the Faculty of Health Sciences or be given the option to follow a transition scheme approved by the Board of Studies.

The degree programme in force must be available on the website of the University of the Faroe Islands.