

# Education plan

for

**Population Health: Societal and Individual Perspectives**

**Masterprogram i Samhälle, individ och folkhälsa**

**120 Higher Education Credits  
120 ECTS credits**

**Program code:** SSIFO  
**Valid from:** Autumn 2008  
**Date of approval:** 2006-10-12  
**Department:** Centre for Health Equity Studies

## Decision

This plan of study was determined by the faculty board of the Department of Social Sciences.

## Prerequisites and special admittance requirements program

Bachelors degree (180 Högskolepoäng) in sociology, psychology, public health sciences, medicine or similar. Education, experience or other particular circumstances that gives the ability to complete the programme can be assessed as sufficient requirement. Independent scholarly work on undergraduate level is an important requirement. Swedish upper secondary school course English B or equivalent or one of the following tests. Cambridge CPE och CAE: Pass. IELTS : 6.0 (with no part of the test below 5.0). TOEFL (paper based): 550 (with minimum grade 4 on the written test part). TOEFL (computer based): 213. TOEFL (internet based): 79.

## Program structure

The programme is comprised of four terms, with the first term beginning with an introduction to the programme and its interdisciplinary approach. In addition to a comprehensive presentation of the subject field, this first module includes a discussion of the theoretical and methodological starting points within the disciplines included in the programme. This includes a problematization of perspectives that focus on the individual, group and society and how they can be woven together, as well as an introduction to how health can vary in relation to gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic factors and the country of one's domicile. These factors will be discussed and problematized in all subsequent modules and thus constitute a recurrent theme throughout the entire Master's programme. The introduction will be followed by a module that focuses on social policy, social stratification, the welfare state and the labour market, thus focusing mainly on how phenomena on the macro level determine conditions for people's health. The term will end with an introduction to methodology and quantitative methods from psychology, sociology, epidemiology and demography. Term 2 begins with a module focusing on psychobiological processes, stress and health, followed by a module on life course perspectives on health and development, where the centre of attention will be on health and development during different stages of life. The influence of critical periods such as the foetal period and childhood and teenage years, as well as of ageing, on health and health inequalities will be focused upon. The third term will begin with a continuation of methodology, with a focus on still more advanced methods. The second module during the third term will cover international health, especially regional and global changes in health over time. The third and concluding module of the third term will be an introduction to the work of writing the thesis for the Master's degree. This introduction is intended to give students the opportunity at an early stage to begin writing their thesis and thereby gain a better chance of completing the programme in two years. The last term starts with an elective course in another Master's programme or a reading course to prepare for the final thesis, in which students will be able to advance their knowledge of a specific subject in relation to the plan for writing the thesis drawn up the

term before. Towards the end, term 4 will be devoted to independent work on the Master's thesis.

The Master's programme is comprised of both lectures and seminars. Students are expected to prepare for the seminars and take active part in the discussions. Performance in the course modules will be evaluated through written exams, take-home exams and/or in-depth assignments in the form of papers to be discussed at the seminars and in the final thesis.

### **Goals**

The overall objective of the Master's programme's interdisciplinary combination of sociological, psychological, population health and demographic perspectives is to give students an in-depth view of how the health of individuals, groups and populations is linked to social conditions, political and cultural processes, and individuals' behaviour and relations. After receiving a Master's degree students should be able to use these perspectives to deepen their understanding of health in individuals, groups and populations and specifically how gender, age, ethnicity and socioeconomic status cause and maintain differences in health. This means that the Master's programme provides students with broad knowledge of the whole field and significant in-depth knowledge within a few sub-fields. The Master's programme also provides advanced insight into the latest developments in research and development and in-depth method knowledge of the field of study.

For the Master's degree, students should:

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

- demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the field of study, with a certain level of expertise in each of the included scientific fields and a deeper knowledge of the borderland where the different scientific disciplines meet,
- demonstrate in-depth knowledge and insight into specific sub-fields and into the latest developments in the field of research and development

#### **Skills and abilities**

- demonstrate in-depth method knowledge within the various disciplines included in the interdisciplinary field of study,
- show an ability to critically and systematically compile, integrate and summarize knowledge about individuals', groups' or populations' health from the different scientific disciplines,
- be able to analyze, assess and give advice regarding treatment of complex issues, phenomena and situations within the field of study, even based on limited information,
- show an ability to independently and creatively identify and formulate relevant questions, use them in one's planning and, with adequate methods, carry out qualified investigations within given timeframes and be able to evaluate such work,
- show an ability in speech and writing (in the form of e.g. posters and papers) to clearly explain their conclusions and the knowledge and arguments they are based on, for Swedish and international audiences alike, and to be able to carry out a dialogue with various involved groups,
- show the necessary skill for participating in qualified research and study work, in development work or independent work in some other qualified activity

#### **Approach and ethics**

- demonstrate an ability to make one's own judgements in regard to relevant scientific and social aspects and with an awareness of ethical aspects surrounding R&D work in the interdisciplinary field,
- demonstrate insight into both opportunities and limitations of the field, as well as into its role in society and one's own responsibility as to how it is used, and
- demonstrate an ability to identify one's personal need for further knowledge in the field and take responsibility for obtaining it.

### **Courses**

Term 1: Introduction to Population health: Societal and individual perspectives (7.5 ECTS credits)

Term 1: Social stratification: Labour market, social policy and welfare states (15 ECTS crs)

Term 1: Methods I: Introduction to quantitative methods from psychology, sociology, epidemiology and demography (7.5 ECTS crs)

Term 2: Psychobiological processes, stress and health (15 ECTS crs)

Term 2: Life course perspectives on health and development (15 ECTS crs)

Term 3: Methods II: Quantitative methods from psychology, sociology, epidemiology and demography (7.5 ECTS crs)

Term 3: International health: regional and global changes in health over time (15 ECTS crs)

Term 3: Masters thesis, part I (7.5 ECTS crs/30 ECTS crs)  
Term 4: Elective course (7.5 ECTS crs)  
Term 4: Masters thesis, part II (22.5 ECTS crs/30 ECTS crs)  
No course code has yet been established.

**Exam**

Studies lead to a Master's degree (Master of Science in Population Health).