Providing opportunities for MSc Global Health & Management students to engage with organisations to undertake meaningful projects

Work based placements

Student Information booklet

MSc/PgDip Global Health and Management

www.abdn.ac.uk/msc/global-health
The MSc starts with five Core Courses: Applied Statistics, Epidemiology, Qualitative Research Methods, Systematic Reviewing and Health Services Research. During the second session, three core courses are taught on Global Health, Managing People at Work, and The Leadership Challenge. One elective course is also chosen from the Work-Based Placements, or Using Evidence in Practice options. In the third session, students conduct a piece of primary or secondary research written up as a thesis on a Global Health and Management topic. The curriculum is designed and coordinated with an integrated approach to teaching and learning in mind.

The MSc is based in the Institute of Applied Health Sciences (IAHS) within the College of Life Sciences & Medicine. Staff teaching on this MSc and supervising students for the thesis project are based in a number of different academic departments and research units within the IAHS and the Business School.

As part of this programme, we are offering an elective and competitive Work-Based Placement (WBP course in which students work on an organisation-directed project over a 10-12 week period, spending approximately one day per week with the organisation (equates to approx. 100 hours total time contribution that can be spent on/off-site, or in combination). This will increase our student’s employability, workplace relevant skills, and facilitate longer-term partnerships and collaborative opportunities between health and development organisations and academia.

“Masters students and employers increasingly expect an element of workplace experience during postgraduate studies, to complement subject specific knowledge. These are exactly the type of initiatives we need to ensure Scottish postgraduate students gain that experience and the essential workplace skills needed to enhance their employability.”

Professor Bernadette Connolly
Professor in Medical Sciences and Director of Graduate School, College of Life Sciences & Medicine, University of Aberdeen

“It was a great opportunity to complete a project for a well established organisation that required us to use the knowledge gained from our course and our own personal experiences. Hopefully this is a partnership that can continue in the future, as it appears to be mutually beneficial for both parties involved.”

MSc Student, 2011-12
University of Aberdeen
The process

Our approach is characterised by ensuring the ‘goodness-of-fit’ between students and organisations in order to maximise the utility to both parties during the process. To this end, we have a robust recruitment and matching process where students apply in a competitive round and are subsequently matched to project opportunities.

1. September

Global Health Careers
First Semester compulsory non-credit bearing course
- All students in the Global Health and Management programme take this course
- The course focusses on career development and provides an introduction to global health using digital technologies and social media

2. November

Placement projects released
- The placement projects with external groups are advertised.
- All projects have an external and a University-based supervisor

3. December

Students submit applications
- Students who opt to take the Second Semester elective PU5521: Work Based Placements select and apply for placement opportunities advertised.
- Students who wish to be considered for placements in the 2nd stage elective submit an application form, CV and covering letter for the projects(s) they wish to be considered for
- The Cover Letter outlines students’ skills, experience and motivation for the particular placement project(s)
- Students may apply for up to three placement projects.

4. December

Student Selection Process
- Selections take place over the Christmas and New Year break
- External organisations select the students based on the applications and may request informal meetings/interviews with students
- Organisations may also request student(s) to be nominated by the programme coordinator

5. January

Project Agreement
All terms are defined at the outset to ensure all parties have agreed the key parameters for delivery. These include (but are not limited to):
- Project title, start date and delivery deadline;
- Location: whether this be on/off-site, or a combination, and how much time the student spends with the organisation (usually one day per week for 10-12 weeks, equating to approx. 100 hours total time contribution);
- Operating procedures and workplace regulations (working hours, health and safety procedures etc);
- Outputs of the project;
- Intellectual Property rights, confidentiality agreements, and any other checks as necessary.

6. April

Project Delivery
Students will be expected to produce a final report in a style/s requested by your organisation.
Assessment of the final academic output remains the responsibility of the University, but we do ask for input from you in terms of a final feedback based upon student performance and other key criteria.
**What sort of projects can Masters Students do?**
Many different projects are offered with groups based in Scotland, England and overseas. Projects can involve data analysis, modelling, reviews, methods optimisation and comparison, web design, secondary analysis and so on.

**Is this a type of work experience?**
This is very different from ‘work experience’. Students are expected to undertake a dedicated piece of work, or project, on which they can write-up, or complete, a final product. To this end, there must be aims that are achievable within the time and resources available. This will be ensured through discussion with the programme coordinator, projects supervisors and students.

**What about supervision?**
Students are usually appointed two supervisors, one based in the University and one in the external organisation. Although supervisors are available to monitor progress, it is expected that students lead their projects.

Students are also appointed an organisation-based supervisor. This person will be available for a full initial ‘inception meeting’ and briefing and will oversee the project’s development. This person is also available to discuss progress and performance with the University co-supervisor. We generally recommend that a minimum of four meetings are held: at inspection/briefing; during data collection; during analysis; and to oversee the final report prior to submission.

**How long does a project last?**
Projects are generally conducted over a 10-12 week period from January to April (equates to approx. 150 hours total time contribution that can be spent on/off site or in combination as appropriate).

**What will I gain?**
Placement projects offer many benefits to students as they are able to apply postgraduate learning to a workplace environment. The placement experience aims to:
- Offer students a range of new experiences and challenges which will assist in the development of skills;
- Enable students to appreciate the importance of working relationships and their contribution to an organisation’s activities;
- Enhance students’ knowledge of workplace practice and to reinforce the content of their academic study;
- Enhance students’ awareness that skills and knowledge gained in a workplace environment are as relevant and valuable as those gained in an academic setting.
Case studies

Elaine Lyall with the International Union Against TB and Lung Disease, SCOTLAND investigated smoke free legislation in Mexico, Chad, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. Elaine has since conducted further work with IUTBLD and is considering a PhD with the group.

Emma Davies with Health Protection, NHS Grampian, SCOTLAND developed a study protocol to examine local knowledge and attitudes on sexual health. Emma has since secured a position in Public Health Medicine at NHS Grampian.

Eunice Vere with Diva Medical Centre, UGANDA conducted a telephone interview with practitioner in a clinical setting. Since presenting her results, Eunice has been invited to Uganda to continue the research through her research (dissertation) project.

Liliane Nanninga + Bossakara Sokhom with Training and Resource Support Centre, ZIMBABWE, reviewed essential health service packages in over 30 countries in all world regions. Their report is in circulation in the TARSC and EQUINET regional networks.

Marilena Savva with the Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) Scotland investigated ‘smoke drift’ – the ingress of second hand tobacco smoke from smoker’s homes in multi-unit houses. Marilena is continuing to work with ASH Scotland in her dissertation project.

Gillian Noble with Health Protection, NHS Grampian, SCOTLAND developed a proposal for a study on the knowledge, awareness and practices of migrant populations on sexual health. Gillian has continued to work with NHS Grampian in her dissertation project.

Julia Davenel with Naretu Girls and Women Empowerment Programme, KENYA produced a website on this community-based organisation working on female genital mutilation. Julia’s dissertation is examining information technology for women’s empowerment in her dissertation.

Michael Mackenzie with MRC/Wits Rural Public Health and Health Transitions Research Unit, SOUTH AFRICA analysed narratives collected in rural villages in South Africa on end-of-life care and traditional beliefs surrounding epilepsy. Michael’s report has been disseminated locally in a community liaison meeting in Agincourt.
If interested in taking part, please contact:

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**What next?**

PICTURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: A young girl walks through the dump side of Mae Sot, Thailand. The population of the dump side is approximately 350 with 70 scrap huts for shelter. © 2009 Jose Luis Molina Cruz, Courtesy of Photoshare