

UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
Institute of Medicine



Master's Programme in Public Health Science
120.0 Credits

Code: M2PHP

Valid from

HT2026 Autumn semester 2026

Swedish name

Masterprogram i folkhälsovetenskap

Entry level

2 Second cycle

Specialisations

Decision maker

SA Sahlgrenska Academy

Decision date

2025-10-10

Date of entry into force

2025-10-15

Valid from semester

Autumn Semester 2026

Registration number

GU 2025/3287

Purpose

Public Health Science examines how various societal structures influence population health. Emphasis is placed on how political, economic, and cultural factors shape health through the mapping of health status, determinants, and processes that affect health development. Based on this understanding, the discipline addresses questions concerning the distribution of health within populations and the extent to which variations between groups can be traced to social factors — and are therefore possible to change.

The aim of the program is to provide students with advanced knowledge and skills required to successfully engage in strategic and practical public health work within regional, national, and/or international institutions. The program also prepares students for further studies at the doctoral level.

Entry requirements

Qualification for admission to the programme requires professional degree/Bachelor's degree of at least 180 credits in a health science, social science, science, economics, arts or engineering field of education and English: English 6. Or: English level 2

Entry requirements for courses within the programme are stated in respective course syllabus.

Degree and main field of study

This programme leads to a Degree of Master of Medical Science (120 credits) with a major in Public Health Sciences (Medicine masterexamen med huvudområdet Folkhälsovetenskap).

Content

The master's program includes four semesters of full-time study (120 credits) and consists of three semesters of coursework (60 credits of compulsory courses and 30 credits of electives), followed by a final semester devoted to the master's thesis (30 credits).

At the beginning of the program, students take compulsory courses covering the foundations, applications, and research methods of public health science. These are followed by courses focusing on the theoretical and methodological foundations of health economics, as well as on social epidemiology, including its theories, methods, and practical applications. The internship courses provide opportunities for students to apply theoretical knowledge from their chosen area of specialization in a practical work environment at local, national or international organization. The elective courses offered can vary from semester to semester.

Required courses:

- Public health foundations and areas of application, 15 credits
- Epidemiology and Biostatistics, 15 credits

- Qualitative Research Methods, 7.5 credits
- Health equality and the right to health, 7.5 credits
- Social Epidemiology, 7.5 credits
- Health Economics, 7.5 credits
- Master's Thesis, 30 credits

The third semester of the program consists of elective courses. These courses are within the main field of public health science or in closely related disciplines. The electives offered by the Institute of Medicine include a range of options such as Strategic Work for Health Equity, Advanced Health Economics, Work and Health, Migration and Health, Advanced Quantitative Methodology, and Advanced Biostatistics, as well as courses with specific applications and internship courses.

Objectives

General outcomes for Degree of Master (120 credits)

Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including both broad knowledge of the field and a considerable degree of specialised knowledge in certain areas of the field as well as insight into current research and development work, and
- demonstrate specialised methodological knowledge in the main field of study.

Competence and skills

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge and analyse, assess and deal with complex phenomena, issues and situations even with limited information, critically and systematically,
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues critically, autonomously and creatively as well as to plan and, using appropriate methods, undertake advanced tasks within predetermined time frames and so contribute to the formation of knowledge as well as the ability to evaluate this work,
- demonstrate the ability to, both in speech and in writing, clearly report and discuss his or her conclusions and the knowledge and arguments on which they are based, in dialogue with different audiences nationally and internationally, and
- demonstrate the skills required for participation in research and development work or autonomous employment in some other qualified capacity.

Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues and also to demonstrate awareness of ethical aspects of research and development work,
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

Local outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

For the master's degree, the student shall be able to:

- Describe and explain the ethical, theoretical, and methodological foundations of public health

science, as well as its fields of application.

- Describe and explain regional and social variations in disease burden, the processes that lead to these variations, and how such knowledge can inform both structural interventions and those targeting specific population groups.
- Describe and discuss how different welfare and health systems can promote good and equitable health development.

Skills and Abilities

For the master's degree, the student shall be able to:

- Apply qualitative and epidemiological theories and methods to current public health challenges to understand, map, and monitor population health, as well as to identify risk factors and particularly vulnerable groups.
- Compile and explain the foundations and evidence base of public health science related to various public health challenges and interventions, and communicate this knowledge orally and in writing, adapting the communication to different audiences such as policymakers, officials, and the public.
- Discuss and explain the relationship between macroeconomic factors and health and apply micro- and macroeconomic theories to public health questions, including inequalities in health.
- Identify and explain the systematic social determinants and processes that contribute to health inequalities.
- Formulate, propose, and implement measures at a strategic level that can promote good and equitable health at both group and population levels.

Judgement and Approach

For the master's degree, the student shall be able to:

- Critically examine and evaluate political priorities and policies at local, national, and international levels, based on the Right to Health as a social, economic, and environmental sustainability issue.
- Critically assess the strengths of health economic research in terms of theory, methodology, and usefulness as a basis for public health policy decisions.
- Analyze the relationship between resource use and overarching welfare issues and compare and evaluate strategic and targeted public health interventions from sustainability, ethical, and health economic perspectives.
- Analyze and explain the reciprocal relationships between good and equitable health and (a) the function and organization of welfare institutions, (b) the social determinants of health such as education, gender, and income, and (c) individual agency, including lifestyle, trust, and influence.
- Critically assess the strengths and limitations of epidemiological and other public health research, both as a scientific approach and as a basis for policy development.

Sustainability labelling

HFPROG The programme is sustainability-focused, which means that at least one of the outcomes clearly shows that the programme content meets at least one of the University of Gothenburg's confirmed sustainability criteria. The content also constitutes the programme's main focus.

Transitional provisions

The programme syllabus applies for students who start their studies as from autumn semester 2026. Students who after approved study leave want to resume their studies should contact the study counselor for study planning, which then takes place in accordance with the currently valid programme syllabus.

Other regulations

The study programme will be followed up and evaluated in accordance with the applicable Policy for

kvalitetssäkring och kvalitetsutveckling av utbildning vid Göteborgs universitet (Policy for the Quality assurance and Quality Development of Education at the University of Gothenburg). In addition, students are invited to evaluate each individual course included in the programme, both orally and in writing. These evaluations form the basis for the continuous development of the programme. The evaluations will be compiled in writing and returned to the students together with the course managers' responses. The students will also be given the opportunity to participate in a written and/or oral evaluation of the entire programme.

Courses containing elements of internship/field studies may entail costs for students, i.e. travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses.

The language of instruction is English. Students may be allowed to be examined in Swedish, according to the respective syllabus.

Guaranteed admission

Students who have been admitted to the programme and follow the prescribed study pace according to the programme's syllabus have guaranteed admission to the mandatory courses of the programme.

Limited guaranteed admission applies to the elective courses of programme. In both cases if student satisfy entry requirements for admission to respective course.