



INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE

MPH213 Qualitative methods in public health science, 7.5 credits

Kvalitativa metoder inom folkhälsovetenskap, 7,5 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by Institute of Medicine on 2018-03-18 and was last revised on 2019-05-06 to be valid from 2019-05-06, autumn semester of 2019.

Field of education: Medicine 100%

Department: Institute of Medicine

Position in the educational system

The course is a compulsory course within the Master's Programme of Public Health Science. The course can also be offered as an eligible course on advanced level.

The course can be part of the following programme: 1) Master's Programme in Public Health (M2PHP)

Main field of studies

Public Health Sciences

Specialization

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Entry requirements

A Bachelor's degree or professional degree qualification corresponding to at least 180 credits or equivalent, within the main areas of health science or social science.

Applicants must prove their knowledge of English: English 6/English B from Swedish Upper Secondary School or the equivalent level of an internationally recognized test, for example TOEFL, IELTS.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- describe epistemological grounds for qualitative research, different qualitative methods and modes of data-collection, and their strengths and weaknesses for studying different public health issues
- describe internationally established ethical standards and procedures for research, define ethical values and principles and explain how they are applied in laws and policies for research code of conduct

Competence and skills

- identify and describe appropriate study designs and modes of data collection for studying public health issues
- identify and analyze ethical issues arising in qualitative public health research and propose how these issues can be addressed in the design and conduct of a study
- plan for a basic qualitative study and argue for choices for design
- identify ethical issues and prepare for informed consent processes
- conduct a small data-collection, arrange for and carry out analysis

Judgement and approach

- present and reflect on theoretical, methodological and ethical aspects of a qualitative research process
- critically discuss and evaluate qualitative research based on scientific trustworthiness
- reflect on how science and qualitative research relate to overall social goals to level out health inequalities and promote sustainable public health development

The course is sustainability-related, which means that at least one of the learning outcomes clearly shows that the course content meets at least one of the University of Gothenburg's confirmed sustainability criteria.

Course content

The course elaborates on different qualitative methods such as content analyses, grounded theory, phenomenology and ethnography. Furthermore, different modes of data-collection such as interviews, focus groups, observations and document analysis are introduced. In the course the students individually shall plan for and carry out a small pilot study which includes the theoretical and practical features of a qualitative research process such as identify research aim, choose design, identify ethical issues, create interview guide or equivalent, formulate letter for informed consent, collect data, transcribe interviews or equivalent, and carry out analysis at a basic level. Of importance is also to reflect upon and understand the concept of “pre-understanding” and its

implication in public health research. The students can choose to approach and elaborate on a study question related to the final thesis in the program.

Form of teaching

Theoretical lectures are mixed with practical workshops and seminars (individual and in groups) where students train the practical skills that are relevant for qualitative research and get advice on the pilot study and components in the study plan that is produced throughout the course.

Language of instruction: English

Lectures are given in English, but students who take the course as a freestanding course can choose to carry out practical assignments (for example, formulate interview guide and written assignments) in Swedish.

Assessment

The course is examined through:

- one individual written assignment in the form of a study plan (including data collection instruments and analysis of the conducted pilot study).
- 2 compulsory elements (one seminar on quality and trustworthiness in qualitative studies as well as one seminar where a draft of the individual study plan will be presented and discussed).

Absence from any of the 2 compulsory elements has to be supplemented through written assignments in accordance with the course leader's instructions.

If a student, who has failed the same examined component twice, wishes to change examiner before the next examination, a written application shall be sent to the department responsible for the course and shall be granted unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6, Section 22 of Higher Education Ordinance).

A student who has failed the course has the right to be examined in a future offering of the course following the syllabus and course literature applicable at that time.

In cases where a course has been discontinued or has undergone major changes, the student shall normally be guaranteed at least three examination occasions (including the ordinary examination) during a period of at least one year from the last time the course was given.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U). For the grade Pass with Distinction (VG) on the whole course the student must have achieved VG on the individual written assignment (the study plan) and G on all the compulsory elements in the course. For the grade Pass (G) the student must have achieved G on the individual written assignment (the study plan) and G on all the compulsory elements in the course.

Regarding the application of ECTS scales, please see Vice-Chancellor's decision 2007-05-28, dnr G 8 1976/07 as well as 2011-02-28, dnr O 2009/5545.

Course evaluation

The course evaluation is carried out in writing via the learning platform of University of Gothenburg, as well as orally in dialogue with the students.

The course leader compiles an analysis of the course evaluation and proposes changes for development of the course. The analysis is discussed with the students through the program council. Analysis and suggestions are communicated to the students and published via the learning platform.

The result and possible changes in the course structure are shared both with the students who carried out the evaluation and the students starting the course.