THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR
M.A. Honours in Health, Science and Society

1) Awarding Institution: University of Edinburgh
2) Teaching Institution: University of Edinburgh
3) Programme accredited by: University of Edinburgh
4) Final Award: MA (Honours)
5) Programme Title: MA (Honours) in Health, Science and Society
6) UCAS Code:
   Relevant QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s): Health Studies
7) Postholder with overall responsibility for QA: Suzanne O'Rourke
8) Date of production/revision: March 2013 / August 2014
9) External Summary (200-250 words)

The study of health, illness, and social arrangements for care is of critical importance both nationally and internationally. Gross inequalities in the experience of health and access to care systems and resources are best studied by taking an interdisciplinary focus on the social, political and cultural forces that bear upon the social experience of health and care. Both the natural and social sciences have contributed to changing understandings of and interventions in human health across the generations and around the world.

This programme offers an opportunity to build a robust understanding of the complexity of the human experience in this arena through an interdisciplinary and integrative approach. Three broad themes run through the programme: societies and communities; individuals, personhood and experience; and healthcare, social care and professional development. This focus is pursued through a variety of disciplinary perspectives augmented by the flexibility offered by the many health-related option courses available across the University.

The main programme aims are:

- To explore the relationship between health, illness and diverse social contexts
- To engage with concepts of care and its delivery in health and social care settings
- To develop critical understanding of the role of individuals and communities in health outcomes

10) Educational aims of programme:

- To develop the intellectual curiosity and social responsibility of students in relation the social experience of health and avenues of care
• To provide a stimulating and supportive environment for growth in knowledge and scholarly proficiency
• To produce socially- and culturally-aware graduates who
  o Recognise the social and political determinants of physical and mental health and their interaction in individuals and communities
  o Appreciate the concept of the person and the position of individuals in relation to care services
  o Appreciate the role of community and its capacity to influence local health outcomes
  o Understand the place of evidence and research in informing policy and practice
  o Appreciate the nature of professional practice and the values underpinning care

• To encourage the development of key intellectual skills: conceptualisation, analysis, independent and flexible thinking, positive approach to problem-solving
• To encourage the development of key practical skills: group-working, communication, information retrieval and critical synthesis
• To inculcate critical understanding, knowledge and skills relevant to the wider health and social care arena
• To produce capable and confident graduates prepared for further challenges in employment or study in the spirit of open enquiry and independent self-direction.

11) Programme outcomes:

11a) Knowledge and understanding

By engaging with, and completing, the MA (Honours) degree in Health, Science and Society graduates will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

• Sociological approaches to the patterning of mental and physical health and illness across societies
• Variability and diversity in concepts of health and illness and lay beliefs and behaviours
• Social and medical models of disability and chronic illness
• Discrimination, deviance and stigma with regard to health or disability issues
• Key current challenges and their social and political contexts
• Theories of communication in the healthcare arena
• The concepts of embodiment and personhood, and their relation to experiences of health and illness
• Concepts of personal healing and spirituality as features of illness experience
• Mental health issues and learning disabilities in social context, and psychological approaches to therapy
• Ethical theory and practice in health and social care
• Critical challenges in healthcare teamwork and social care partnerships
• Leadership and change management in health and social care work
• The relation between research, policy and professional practice
• Self-management in long-term conditions and the personalisation agenda
• The role of community in local experience of health and illness
• Research methods and their use in developing knowledge and practice

11b) Graduate attributes: Skills and abilities in Research and Enquiry

By engaging with, and completing, the MA (Honours) degree in Health, Science and Society graduates will be able to:
• Identify, define and analyse problems in the experience of health and the delivery of care and identify and contribute to processes towards improvement
• Ask key questions and exercise rational enquiry
• Appreciate the limitations of their own knowledge
• Search for, evaluate and make productive use of information to develop their knowledge and understanding
• Critically assess existing understanding and recognise the contextual and often disciplinary nature of knowledge and the need for multiple perspectives for the advancement of care services and health outcomes
• Understand a variety of approaches to research and knowledge production, the stages of research and the contingent nature of evidence
• Exercise critical judgment in creating new understanding and its dissemination
• Demonstrate respect and critical awareness of disciplinary boundaries in the health arena and the values, principles and targets that shape work trajectories

11c) Graduate Attributes: Skills and abilities in Personal and Intellectual Autonomy

By engaging with, and completing, the MA (Honours) degree in Health, Science and Society graduates will be able to:

• Operate a variety of strategies and tools to access information for critical use or review
• Absorb new ideas from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and be able to work with them creatively
• Maintain intellectual curiosity and commitment to lifelong learning
• Demonstrate the ability to learn independently and to reflect on their learning experiences
• Identify processes, strategies and goals for their own learning with regard to their own learning style
• Accept constructive criticism and feedback and put it to good use
• Use skills of collaborative working to effectively build group and facilitative relationships
• Make decisions on the basis of evidence and targets with full regard for ethical and professional values and practices

11d) Graduate Attributes: Skills and abilities in Communication

By engaging with, and completing, the MA (Honours) degree in Health, Science and Society graduates will be able to:

• Recognise the centrality of communication in the experience of health and the delivery of care
• Recognise the benefits and importance of communicating with those beyond their immediate environments
• Use communication as a tool for collaborating and relating to others including awareness of its central role in therapeutic contexts
• Use effective communication to exchange knowledge and ideas in a variety of milieu and across a range of purposes
• Communicate with others sensitively and effectively through a range of media
• Use a wide range of specialist terms and concepts appropriately and with clarity of outcome
• Engage in informed and exploratory debate with others through both individual presentation and group work

11e) Graduate Attributes: Skills and abilities in Personal Effectiveness

By engaging with, and completing, the MA (Honours) degree in Health, Science and Society graduates will be able to:

• Have confidence in their personal abilities, knowledge and values as contributors to aspects of individual and community health and wellbeing
• Demonstrate understanding of social, cultural, global and community responsibilities and issues in working for better health outcomes
• Respond to the changing social and political context and policy environment of health and social care whilst retaining proactivity and flexible thinking
• Identify priorities and tailor work to time and resource constraints
• Appreciate and capitalise on the skills and contributions of others to benefit from diversity and promote equality and the recognition of different sources of expertise

11f) Technical/practical skills

By engaging with, and completing, the MA (Honours) degree in Health, Science and Society graduates will be able to:

• Demonstrate benefit from exposure to specific communication skills, notably therapeutic listening and techniques of response
• Enhance IT skills to support learning and professional networking

12) Programme structure and features

The proposed programme aligns with the University's Curriculum Framework for a single honours degree. Full details of SQCF credit points and levels for each constituent course and each year of the programme including progression requirements are given in the Degree Programme Table for this degree. Students will be expected to undertake 4800 hours of study for the full award of the Honours degree, or 3600 hours for the ordinary degree.

Entry requirements

The standard CHSS entry requirements would apply for this degree programme, but to widen participation, recognition of prior learning will also enable students from non-traditional backgrounds to be considered:
Minimum entry requirements:

SQA Highers: BBBB (or more if two sittings)
GCE A Levels: BBB
IB: 34 points overall and grades 555 at Higher Level

Other qualifications and experience are considered on an individual basis.
Students would have the option to exit with a BA (ordinary) degree in Health, Science and Society after successful completion of 360 credit points at the end of the third year.

*Strategic aspects of the programme*

The proposed programme has been developed with considerable thought regarding social responsibility and sustainability, and equality and diversity. The four years of the proposed programme make a direct contribution to the future workforce in the area of health and wellbeing, an area of considerable interest in the agenda for social responsibility and sustainability regarding communities both locally and internationally. The inclusion of two community engagement courses that are based upon voluntary work equip potential graduates with both work experience and community-based learning as well as the opportunity to make a direct contribution to local services and communities. Furthermore, the contribution of Edinburgh University to its surrounding communities is enhanced as the numbers of students engaged in these initiatives increases.

The Scottish Government, as part of its Scotland Performs Framework, emphasises Health as one of its five national strategic objectives. This is underpinned by 16 national outcomes of which 7 centre on improving health, reducing inequalities, and improving access to high-quality public services. Equipping students with broad knowledge, understanding and skills to participate in this endeavour both nationally and internationally is therefore not only timely but also a significant contribution to community goals and sustainability.

The proposed programme has also been developed with regard to the inclusion of a wide range of students from diverse backgrounds, including both those continuing study direct from secondary education and more mature students returning to study, including via non-traditional routes. We will pursue best practice in Widening Participation including active engagement with those coming to the University through non-traditional routes, in line with the Scottish Government’s *Learning for All* agenda. The School has considerable experience in fostering the study skills of students from a range of backgrounds, including international students.

The modes of study and assessment are designed to support the learning outcomes throughout the programme of study. The programme has been designed to be as accessible as possible, making full use of opportunities to enhance the learning experience for all students across a range of strengths, needs and learning styles.

It is our intention to invite students to join a social networking site at the time of an offer of a place in order to build relationships with and among prospective students and strengthen conversion.

13) *Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies*

Teaching and learning methods vary across the programme and move incrementally towards giving more responsibility to students.

*Year 1*
Core courses are delivered through lectures and tutorials which incorporate a variety of classroom activities and small group discussion.

*Year 2*
Core courses are delivered through lectures and tutorials. However, within this format Contemporary Issues in Health and Illness will be taught through guided group work organised around key topics using peer learning. The activities and outputs of each group will be shared through a class wiki.

Communication: Theory and Practice will involve aspects of practical work undertaken in pairs or small groups.
Years 3 and 4
These courses will be taught through seminars and workshops and will make use of group and project work to maximise the range of learning opportunities.

Innovative learning week
This week gives an opportunity for students across the School to actively engage in a cross-year and cross-discipline programme. A range of activities, both staff and student led, is envisaged.

14) Assessment Methods and Strategies
The proposed programme aims to use a variety of assessment methods, including reflective self-assessment, paying full regard to accessibility across the full range of students. Each course tailors assessment according to its learning outcomes. Formative assessment focuses on individual course aims, while summative assessment is linked both to these and to the aims of the programme as a whole. Class or group feedback will be provided after all assessments, and individual feedback provided on all individually-assessed work. Students will also be engaged in guided peer feedback and assessment activities throughout the course to enhance learning, and to promote skills and understanding of demonstration and application of learning targets.

15) Career Opportunities
This degree programme is ideal for those who do not wish to commit themselves at this point to a professional career in nursing, social work, or medicine but are interested in non-vocational opportunities for careers in the expanding health and social care sector. It is an excellent basis for managerial or administrative roles within health and social care, but can also be studied as a broad-based degree in an area of perennial and pervasive importance to human societies for students interested in contemporary society and this aspect of human experience. For these students, a variety of careers are available such as in journalism, education, international health and social care development, and government.

The health and social care field offers a range of opportunities for a career in the public, independent and voluntary sectors. The sector is complex and subject to rapid change, and this multidisciplinary and flexible degree programme equips students to enter this diverse and growing arena. The new Community Engagement course options allow students to gain practical experience and develop work-based skills to enhance their employability.

The degree can lead to careers in community services, the voluntary sector, health services management, policy and research, health journalism, health education, patient advocacy, health promotion, liaison roles in health and social care, and project management/coordination.

The degree also equips students for further study, either towards professional accreditation (e.g. in counselling, clinical psychology, social work or teaching) or entry onto Masters Programmes to extend subject specialisms and/or research competency.

The University has an excellent employment record with recent figures showing that 94.5% of students leaving Edinburgh were either in employment or further study six months after graduation. Furthermore, the University is ranked 15th for employability in the QS World University Rankings.
16) Other Items

Quality and standards of learning and teaching
As this is a new degree programme we will be paying particularly close attention to student experience of the new courses and overall programme structure, our assessment strategy, and to the quality of teaching and learning.

Two students from each course, supported by a course facebook or similar social networking page, will be invited to join a programme staff-student liaison group. This group will meet once per semester after teaching has been completed. Liaison students will be advised to take up EUSA opportunities for training for the role.

Course organisers, as part of regular course evaluation, will meet with their course representatives to discuss feedback received directly from students, and to receive concerns aired on the course networking site, with a view to making appropriate adjustments to course delivery and assessment. Course organisers will also meet with their representatives at a mid-point in the semester to make any appropriate and feasible adjustments necessary for onward smooth running of the course. These discussions and adjustments will be recorded in course reports for regular audit purposes and to feed into the fine-tuning and further development of the programme.

All beginning students will be invited to enrol on a degree programme entry year electronic forum. This will be carefully monitored at the commencement of the programme to provide guidance on course choice and enrolment, to answer questions, and oversee a smooth transition through Fresher’s week to university study. The page will remain open throughout the four years of study for student exchange and peer support for the duration of the programme.