UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Programme Specification 2023

Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health

MSc degree
Postgraduate Diploma
Postgraduate Certificate
and Individual modules

Important document – please read

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Important information regarding the Programme Specification

Last revised 21 November 2022

About this document

The Programme Specification gives a broad outline of the structure and content of the programme, the entry level qualifications, as well as the learning outcomes students will achieve as they progress. Some of the information referred to in a programme specification is included in more detail on the University of London website. Where this is the case, links to the relevant webpage are included.

Where links to external organisations are provided, The University of London is not responsible for their content and does not recommend nor necessarily agree with opinions expressed and services provided at those sites.

If you have a query about any of the programme information provided, whether here or on the website, registered students should use the *ask a question* button in the Student Portal; otherwise the *Contact Us* button on each webpage should be used.

The relevant General Regulations and the Programme Regulations relating to your registration with us are for the current year and not the year in which you initially registered.

On all matters where the regulations are to be interpreted, or are silent, our decision will be final.

Terminology:

Module: Individual units of a programme are called module. Each unit is a self-contained, formally structured learning experience with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA): This is a component of each module, other than the research project. It takes the form of a written assignment or short answer paper and carries a weighting of 20% of the overall pass mark for the module.

Key revisions made

Programme Specifications are revised annually. The quality committee of the Royal Veterinary College, as part of its annual review of standards, confirms the programme structure and the educational aims and learning outcomes, and advises on any development in student support. Where there are changes which may impact on continuing students, these are listed below. For all new students, the programme and general information provided in this document is correct and accurate and will be applicable for the current year.

Significant changes made to the Programme Specification 2023:

Computer Specification has been updated and modules where there are additional computer requirements are now listed under Computer Specification.

- Notice has been served on the Livestock Health and Production programmes. It is no longer possible to initially register for the following programmes:
    - MSc Livestock Health and Production
    - Postgraduate Diploma in Livestock Health and Production
    - Postgraduate Certificate in Livestock Health and Production

- The last assessments for the Livestock Health and Production programmes will be held in 2027. After this date it will not be possible to take or retake an assessment for this programme.

The Programme Specification for Livestock Health and Production can be found on the VLE only.

Programme Title and Qualifications

Programme title

Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health

Qualifications

Students are registered on one of the following:

- Master of Science in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health
- Postgraduate Diploma in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health
- Postgraduate Certificate in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health

Exit qualifications

- Postgraduate Diploma in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health
- Postgraduate Certificate in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health

Students who for academic or personal reasons are unable to complete the Master of Science degree may be awarded the related Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate if they have successfully completed the modules required for those respective qualifications. Exit qualifications are granted at the discretion of the Board of Examiners and once a student has accepted an exit qualification they will not be permitted to continue their study of the same award with the University of London.

Individual modules available for study on a stand-alone basis

Modules of the programme may be studied and assessed on an individual, credit-bearing, stand-alone basis; these modules comprise a notional 240 study hours. Additionally, there are a selection of shorter, 50-hour and 35-hour, non-credit bearing individual modules available primarily for continuing professional development.

Award titles may be abbreviated as follows:

Master of Science – MSc

Postgraduate Diploma – PGDip

Postgraduate Certificate – PGCert

Level of the programmes

The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) forms part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

The awards are placed at the following Levels of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ):

- Master of Science degree (MSc) Level 7
- Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) Level 7
- Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) Level 7
- 240-hour Individual modules Level 7
- 50-hour Individual modules Level 7
- 35-hour Individual modules Level 7

Relevant QAA subject benchmarks group(s)

See the QAA website for information.

Awarding body

University of London

Registering body

University of London and the Royal Veterinary College

Academic direction

Royal Veterinary College

Accreditation by professional or statutory body

Not applicable

Language of study and assessment

English

Mode of study

Study is by distance and flexible learning.

Programme structures

The **MSc Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health** consists of seven modules as follows:

- three compulsory core modules *plus*
- four optional modules from a selection.

The **Postgraduate Diploma in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health** consists of four modules as follows:

- two compulsory core modules *plus*
- two optional modules from a selection.

The **Postgraduate Certificate in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health** consists of:

- two compulsory core modules.

Individual modules

The Royal Veterinary College offers individual modules through the University of London. Individual modules accommodate either 35, 50 or 240 notional study hours. The 240-hour individual modules are whole modules taken from the degree programme. The 35 and 50-hour individual modules are extracts, taken from the degree programme, which enable a student to study stand-alone content without committing to a full module.
A student may take any number of individual modules but only two relevant 240-hour individual modules may be considered for contribution towards a Postgraduate Diploma or MSc degree, and only one relevant 240-hour individual module may be counted towards a Postgraduate Certificate.

A student may take any number of 35-hour or 50-hour modules, however, there is no progression from these individual modules to the MSc, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate.

Exit qualifications

MSc

At the discretion of the Board of Examiners, a student registered for the MSc degree who fails to complete all the modules for the degree may be awarded *either*

- the Postgraduate Diploma provided they have passed the four modules comprising the Diploma; or
- the Postgraduate Certificate provided they have passed the two core modules comprising the Certificate.

A student may transfer their registration from the MSc degree to the Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate.

Postgraduate Diploma

At the discretion of the Board of Examiners, a student registered for the Postgraduate Diploma who fails to complete all four modules may be awarded

- the Postgraduate Certificate provided they have passed the two core modules comprising the Certificate.

A student may transfer their registration from the Postgraduate Diploma to the Postgraduate Certificate.

Full details of the Scheme of Award are included in Section 8 of the Programme Regulations.

Maximum and minimum periods of registration

The maximum and minimum period of registration, from a student's effective date of registration, are:

	Minimum	Maximum
MSc	2 years	5 years
Postgraduate Diploma	2 years	5 years
Postgraduate Certificate	1 year	5 years
Credit bearing 240-hour individual modules	1 year	2 years
Non-credit bearing 50-hour individual modules	None	1 year
Non-credit bearing 35-hour individual modules	None	1 year

Study materials are made available after registration and on payment of any applicable fee.

Credit value of modules

Further information about the credit systems used by universities in the UK and Europe is provided by the Quality Assurance Agency and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.

Where credits are assigned to modules of a programme, credit indicates the amount of learning carried out in terms of the notional number of study hours needed, and the specified Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England (FHEQ) level indicates the depth, complexity and intellectual demand of learning involved.

For the qualifications of MSc, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Livestock Health and Production or Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health, credit has not been assigned.

Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning is a generic term for the process by which we recognise learning that has taken place at an institution other than the University of London before entry onto a programme of study.

Where the prior learning covered a similar syllabus to a module/course studied elsewhere, credit will be awarded as if you took the University of London module/course.

See the General Regulations (Section 3) and Programme Regulations for more rules relating to prior learning.

For this programme the University of London may recognise your prior learning and permit this to contribute towards the qualification.

Entrance requirements

Postgraduate entrance requirements

Applicants must submit an application in line with the procedures and deadlines set out on the website.

Entrance requirements for a postgraduate qualification, or individual modules, vary. Full details are provided on the programme pages under the Requirements tab.

All details of the programme-specific requirements are given on the programme page.

English language requirements

All applicants must satisfy the English language requirements for the programme. These are set out in detail under the Entry Requirements tabs of the course pages on the website.

Where an applicant does not meet the prescribed English language proficiency requirements but believes that they can demonstrate the requisite proficiency for admission the University may, at its discretion, consider the application.

Computer specification

Students will require regular access to a computer with an internet connection to use the Royal Veterinary College and University of London's online resources and systems.

Students must be able to download and install software to their Windows or MacOS device to include secure examination browsers for online assessment purposes (if offered on your programme of study).

The computer must have at least the following minimum specification:

- Windows: 7, 8, and 10 on 64-bit platforms (Windows 10 recommended)
- macOS: OS X 10.14 and higher
- CPUs newer than 2011 (Intel Sandy Bridge or newer)
- OpenGL 2.0 graphics driver
- Local storage for the recording of proctored examinations (75MB per hour)
- Web camera & microphone (internal or external)
- A broadband internet connection (minimum of 0.15Mbps upload speed)

And the following applications installed:

- a word processor that accepts Microsoft Word formats (.doc and .docx);
- a PDF reader (for example Adobe).
- software for playing mp3 and mp4 files.

The following modules require specific software:

- Advanced statistical methods in veterinary epidemiology [VPM013]
- Management of infectious disease outbreaks in animal populations [LVM017]

- Statistical methods in veterinary epidemiology [VPM012]
- Surveillance and investigation of animal health [VPM015]

For further information regarding specific software requirements for the above modules, please refer to the Programme Regulations.

Students must be able to download and install software to their Windows or MacOS device to include secure examination browsers for online assessment purposes (if offered on your programme of study).

Students with specific access requirements

The University of London welcomes applications from disabled students and/or those who have access requirements. The University will make every effort to provide reasonable adjustments to enable those with a disability, learning difficulty or access requirements to have the same opportunity as all other students to successfully complete their studies. The University is committed to managing the application procedure and the programme itself to ensure that services are accessible for all students and that an inclusive environment is created. Students with a disability, or others who may need access arrangements to assist in taking examinations, should complete the relevant section of the application form, or contact the Inclusive Practice Manager. A separate room or other arrangements may be considered.

Requests are considered by a University panel, whose purpose is to ensure that students with disabilities and/or specific access requirements are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by such arrangements when compared with other students. These considerations remain separate from the academic selection processes.

For further information, see Inclusive Practice Policy

Sources of funding and scholarships

Information about potential sources of funding and scholarships is updated annually and where available is included in the prospectus web pages.

For information, please see RVC and Funding your study pages.

Educational aims and learning outcomes of the programmes

This programme is aimed at animal health specialists, epidemiologists and public health specialists with an understanding of the conceptual basis of veterinary epidemiology and public health.

Successful completion of the Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma may allow progression to the related MSc degree. Successful completion of the MSc degree may allow students to progress to postgraduate research in the field of study or a related area.

The core modules provide an essential introduction to a variety of approaches, methods and subjects. These modules are designed to equip students with the preliminary practical and intellectual skills necessary for progression to the next level. Within the Postgraduate Diploma and the MSc degree there is a natural progression from the core modules to the optional modules.

Although the optional modules may not in themselves be more difficult, students will develop a greater understanding and a sophistication of thinking as they progress through the

modules in this order. Within the selection of optional modules there is an element of choice in subject matter and disciplinary areas of study.

The programme aims to provide students with:

- An understanding of the role of veterinary epidemiology and economics in the design and delivery of effective livestock services.
- Knowledge of risk analysis approaches in food safety and how human health can be protected through control of zoonotic diseases.
- Skills in basic and advanced statistical methods in order to undertake epidemiological investigations and disease modelling.

Depending on the options taken, the MSc degree and Postgraduate Diploma also aim to provide students with:

- An understanding of the farming systems approach to animal production and how to appraise and monitor livestock production systems through development and execution.
- Information on how to formulate a hypothesis and undertake a research project, analyse and present data and how to develop a grant application.
- Facts on economic and livestock policy for development of farming systems under different socio-economic conditions.
- Knowledge so that they can develop their own strategies for combating chronic farm animal diseases, control zoonotic diseases through surveillance and apply herd health programmes to maximise economic returns from animal production.

The learning outcomes of the programme are as follows:

Knowledge and Understanding

An MSc student will be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

- Concepts of epidemiological investigations and to use economic methods in animal health and production.
- Statistical methods used in veterinary epidemiology to analyse data.
- Spatial data analysis methods to interpret geographic data.
- The role in the protection of human health through the safe production of foods of animal origin, control of zoonotic disease and environment.
- Future livestock development and the provision and use of tools to analyse the issues confronting producers, their advisers, planners and policy makers.
- Appropriate husbandry for different animals in diverse environmental and socio-economic conditions.
- Disease surveillance programmes and the tools that can be used to assist decision-making in relation to disease control and prevention.
- Principles of undertaking a research project, including how to formulate a hypothesis, analyse and present data and how to develop a grant application.

A Postgraduate Diploma student will be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

- Concepts of epidemiological investigations and how to use economic methods in animal health and production.
- Statistical methods used in veterinary epidemiology to analyse data.

- The role in the protection of human health through the safe production of foods of animal origin, control of zoonotic disease and environment.
- Future livestock development and the provision and use of tools to analyse the issues confronting producers, their advisers, planners and policy makers.

A Postgraduate Certificate student will be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

- Concepts of epidemiological investigations and how to use economic methods in animal health and production.
- The role in the protection of human health through the safe production of foods of animal origin, control of zoonotic disease and environment.

Practical skills

Depending on the level of qualification achieved, a student will be able to:

- Analyse epidemiological data and interpret them clearly.
- Display spatial maps using geographical information systems software.
- Perform risk analysis and build and analyse risk models.
- Develop scientific skills, including critical review of the scientific literature.
- Demonstrate decision-making skills to analyse animal health problems at farm and national level.

Together with the specific knowledge-based and practical skills, all students are expected to acquire a range of cognitive and transferable skills.

Intellectual and Cognitive skills

A student will be able to develop skills in:

- Planning
- Logic and reasoning
- Comprehension
- Visual and auditory processing
- Long-term memory

Transferable skills

A student will be able to develop and demonstrate:

- Independent learning skills, taking responsibility for own studies.
- Time management skills.
- Organisational skills.
- Becoming a reflective self-manager, by taking a systematic, analytical, strategic and reflective approach to study tasks.
- Information gathering and analytical skills to make own judgements about ideas and knowledge.
- Written skills.
- Information technology skills.
- Understanding of own strengths and weaknesses, and ability to work effectively in an isolated study situation.

Learning, teaching and assessment strategies

These programmes are designed so that the student is provided with all the primary material required to complete the modules. All students will have access to a Study Guide (directed learning notes) and a Reader (selection of readings to be read alongside the Study Guide). There may also be textbooks and/or CDs. Materials will vary by module and may take the form of hard copies, or online access. Wider reading to supplement the study material is recommended.

These programmes combine educational methods that encourage self-directed learning, reflection on personal experience, and critical thinking with web technology and access to online resources. The programme uses a virtual learning environment that enables students to engage in collaborative learning. Tutors are available online at set times throughout the academic year to respond to academic queries, via the virtual learning environment.

Up to two TMAs may be assessed for each module. These TMAs act both as formative and summative assessments and carry a weighting of 20% of the overall module mark. Each TMA is marked and returned to the student to help the student understand how well they are doing and learn how to improve. The highest mark gained counts towards the formal coursework assessment element for the modules.

In these programmes unseen written examination constitutes 80% of the programme assessment. The unseen written examinations are structured not only to assess knowledge and understanding but also to examine the way that students manage data, solve problems, evaluate ideas and the organisational skills they use to structure answers, while allowing the standard of intellectual and transferable skills to be assessed.

There is one optional module (the Research Project) available on the MSc degree which is assessed by submission of a research paper and by an oral examination. Specific practical skills and transferable skills are assessed.

Assessment criteria for the programme are used to measure the level at which the skills have been achieved.

Assessment methods

In line with our current General Regulations, the University may offer students alternative assessments where necessary. This includes holding online timed assessments in place of written examinations, which are usually held at examination centres.

MSc, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate

With the exception of the Research Project, modules are assessed by one three-hour unseen written examination, which may contain essay and/or shorter questions.

Students will also be required to submit up to two TMAs per module, the highest mark of which will count as part of the formal assessment.

The mark awarded for each module will be based on both the written examination and the TMA weighted in the scale 80:20 respectively.

All candidates must have completed and been assessed in one TMA prior to the examination. Written examinations take place annually in October at established examination centres worldwide. TMAs are subject to deadlines but can be submitted at any time during the year leading up to the examination.

The optional Research Project is assessed by the submission of a paper suitable for publication in an identified scientific journal (80%) and an oral examination conducted either face-to-face or via the telephone (20%).

Individual modules

A student may choose whether or not to be formally assessed in the 240-hour individual modules for which they are registered. The assessment for each 240-hour individual module comprises a TMA and a three-hour unseen written paper.

Shorter individual modules are also offered as 35-hour individual modules and 50-hour individual modules. Each 35-hour individual module will be assessed by either a short answer paper or a TMA. Each 50-hour individual module will be assessed by a written TMA.

Full details of the dates of all examinations are available on the website.

Student support and guidance

The following summarises the support and guidance available to students:

- Student Guide: This provides information which is common to all students and gives information about matters of importance from the start of a student's relationship with the University of London through to their graduation.
- A Programme Handbook that includes information about the learning resources, the procedures for assessment and examinations and advice on study skills.
- The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE): This gives access to materials (including lessons, activities and assignments) for each module studied and a student discussion board (for credit-bearing modules only, not 35 and 50 hour individual modules).
- Submit course material queries to an RVC academic for assistance. (There is no direct access to a personal tutor.)
- Participate in scheduled webinars with the opportunity for Q&As.A Study Guide containing directed learning notes (dependent upon the module taken this item may be supplied online).
- A Reader containing photocopied journal articles and book chapters (dependent upon the module taken this item may be supplied online).
- Textbooks for certain modules (dependent upon the module taken, this item may be supplied online).
- A Model Examination paper and Examiner's 'report (degree modules only). These provide generic feedback.
- The Programme Regulations contain full details of the syllabus, programme structure, assessment regulations, degree classification criteria, etc.
- Access to the University of London Online Library: This provides a range of full-text, multidisciplinary databases where journal articles, book reviews and reports can be found.
- Access to the Royal Veterinary College Online Library.

- Access to the University of London library – registered students may use the resources located within the Senate House library.
- Access to the Royal Veterinary College libraries, subject to appointment.
- A Royal Veterinary College email account and access to the wider RVC community
- A University of London email account and web area for personal information management.

There is further information on support and guidance in the Student guide and the Programme handbook.

Quality evaluation and enhancement

The University of London delivers the majority of its flexible and distance learning programmes through a collaboration between the University of London Worldwide and member institutions of the University of London. However some of the flexible and distance learning programmes draw solely on academic input from the University of London, and are delivered without academic lead by a member institutions. The policies, partnerships (where applicable) and quality assurance mechanisms applicable for the programmes are defined in the following key documents: The Quality Framework, the Quality Assurance Schedules, Guidelines for Examinations, General Regulations and, for each programme, programme specific regulations.

Awards standards

All University of London qualifications have to align with the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies to assure appropriate standards for each qualification. In addition, every programme that is developed by a member institution of the University of London (or a consortium with representation by more than one member institution) will be developed to the same standard as would be applied within the institution concerned. Proportionate and robust approval procedures, including external scrutiny and student engagement are in place for all programmes. Learning materials are written and all assessments are set and marked by academic staff who are required to apply the University's academic standards.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

Some of the key mechanisms in place to assure the standards of all University of London qualifications and the quality of the student experience, include:

- Annual programme reports: produced for all programmes in order to review and enhance the provision and to plan ahead;
- Independent external examiners: submit reports every year to confirm that a programme has been assessed properly and meets the appropriate academic standards;
- Annual student information statistics: prepared for all systematic reporting within the University of London;
- Periodic programme reviews: carried out every 4-6 years to review how a programme has developed over time and to make sure that it remains current and up-to-date.

Improvements are made as necessary to ensure that systems remain effective and rigorous.

Student feedback and engagement

The Student Experience Survey, carried out every two years, collects feedback from the student body on a range of topics relating to the student lifecycle. The results are considered in a number of different ways, including by the Pro-Vice Chancellor, the programme team, principal committees and departments at the University of London responsible for the different aspects of the student experience. Once the findings have been considered in detail, responses are published from both the University of London and from the individual Programme Directors.

Individual Module surveys are conducted annually via the programme team. There may also be occasional surveys through the student portal, or by email. Students are welcome to provide feedback at any time to the programme team.

VLEs also provide the opportunity for informal feedback and discussion.

An undergraduate and postgraduate student member is appointed by the University to the majority of committees through an annual appointment round. Some programmes also recruit student members at the programme level. Students are frequently invited to take part in quality review processes such as Periodic Programme Reviews, Programme approval, Thematic Reviews, MOOC review panels and ad hoc focus groups. Opportunities such as these are advertised through social media and on the website. More information can be found on the website.

After graduation

Further study

Successful completion of the programme may serve as preparation for students who wish to go on to take further study in the subject area – whether to be undertaken at the Royal Veterinary College or elsewhere.

Possible graduate employment routes

The Livestock Health and Production and Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health programmes are designed for those who wish to pursue careers as veterinarians, animal health specialists and livestock farmers.

The Alumni Network

Upon graduation, students automatically become members of the University of London Alumni Network, a diverse worldwide community of alumni in more than 180 countries. The Alumni Network can provide past students with lifelong links to the University of London and each other. Benefits include social and networking events, access to local groups, a bi-annual magazine, social networking groups, and the opportunity to become an Alumni Ambassador for the University of London.

Graduates of this programme are also invited to become members of the RVC alumni society, RVC4Life.

For further information, please see University of London Alumni, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn