



Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study awarded by The University of Sheffield

1	Programme Title	Dental Public Health
2	Programme Code	DENT75 (Full-time) DENT76 (Part-time)
3	JACS Code	A900
4	Level of Study	Postgraduate
5	Final Qualification	MDPH
6	Intermediate Qualification(s)	Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Health
9	School	Clinical Dentistry, Oral Health and Development
10	Other School(s) involved in teaching the programme	Medicine and Population Health
11	Mode(s) of Attendance	Full-time or Part-time
12	Duration of the Programme	1 year or 2 years
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
14	Date of production/revision	April 2004, September 2005, December 2008, April 2013, January 2016, January 2017, February 2018, June 2023, October 2024, March 2026

15. Background to the programme and subject area

Dental Public Health (DPH) is the science and art of preventing oral diseases, promoting oral health and improving the quality of life through the organised efforts of society. It is therefore concerned with the application of public health principles to whole communities rather than to individual patients. DPH practitioners are concerned with indicators of oral health, determinants of oral health, evaluation of oral health care services, prevention and control of oral disease, promotion of oral health, policy and service development and prioritisation, evaluation of technology, the effectiveness of treatment modalities, the promotion of clinical effectiveness and evidence-based commissioning.

The discipline is most advanced in the UK, North America, Australia and New Zealand. The European Association of Dental Public Health monitors similar developments across Europe. Middle- and lower-income countries have a great deal to gain from a DPH perspective because it is working at this level that has the greatest impact on the oral health of communities. Dental disease is either more prevalent or increasingly so in these countries and yet they often lack the resources to deal with the disease using the traditional and limited approaches of curative dentistry.

The MDPH Programme will meet these needs. It will cover the broad range of knowledge and skills required for dental public health practice. Generic public health parts of the programme are modelled on the requirements of the Membership of the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) part 1 examination. The specifically dental parts of the programme will meet the requirements for preparation for the Diploma in Dental Public Health Examination of the Royal College of Surgeons.

A Sheffield MDPH will offer advantages of offering interdisciplinary learning with colleagues in Public Health. Sheffield has very close links between academic and NHS departments and the Dental School has links with other Schools and Departments within the university. The degree will benefit from the excellent research and teaching records of the School of Clinical Dentistry. Furthermore, the links with Medicine and Population Health will provide students with access to that School's strengths in health services research, health economics and public health.

Students will be from dental backgrounds predominantly and will benefit from experience of dental practice before joining the programme. Candidates from other backgrounds with appropriate qualifications will also be considered. The degree will be an essential step in training towards becoming a DPH specialist within the UK and other countries.

Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma options are available. Candidates may wish to utilise these to support their individual development needs.

This programme continues to meld together expertise in Public Health and Dental Public Health but now reflects changes in Postgraduate Taught Programmes within the School of Clinical Dentistry. Much of the activity and skills of DPH are generic to Public Health and so the course continues to be offered in combination with that discipline from Medicine and Population Health. This continues to offer both opportunities for interdisciplinary work and economies of scale. The programme will be modular with 45 credits offered in modules common to the Masters' in Public Health, 15 credits are in common with other Masters Programmes in the School of Clinical Dentistry and 60 are specifically related to Dental Public Health. There will be a project component of 60 credits.

16. Programme aims

- To provide critical knowledge and understanding of dental public health.
- To develop students' understanding of the major oral health problems of a community.
- To equip students with the ability to critically analyse dental public health problems and develop practical solutions to protect and promote the public's oral health.
- To enable students to understand and undertake health services research and to apply key findings into dental public health practice.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:	
K1	A systematic understanding of how public health principles apply to professional practice (PGCert/PGDip/Masters).
K2	A comprehensive understanding of how the research process applies to dental public health practice (PGDip/Masters).
K3	A systematic understanding of the use of public health tools to protect and promote the public's oral health (PGCert/PGDip/Masters).
K4	A systematic understanding of health service organisation, management and economics (PGDip/Masters).
K5	A systematic understanding of the broader influences on health, oral health and health care provision (PGDip/Masters).
K6	A comprehensive understanding of current concepts of the major oral diseases (PGDip/Masters).

Skills and other attributes:	
S1	Ability to work independently to define and address dental public health problems (PGDip/Masters).
S2	Ability to critically appraise research literature (PGDip/Masters).
S3	Ability to plan health services research and apply research results (Masters).
S4	Ability to design and implement programmes which protect and promote the public's oral health (PGCert/PGDip/Masters).
S5	Ability to work with others to address the broader determinants of oral and general health (PGCert/PGDip/Masters).

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the programme learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

- 1. Lectures**
Some lecture sessions are required to impart essential information, provide a guide to a topic area and assist students in their independent study (K1-6).
- 2. Seminars and tutorials**
Smaller group work will permit the consolidation of essential knowledge and the development of key skills (K1-6, S1-5).
- 3. Independent study**
Independent study is required within all modules in order to cover all the required knowledge and to ensure that the students can apply and use the knowledge appropriately. (K1-6, S1-5).
- 4. Dissertation**
The dissertation can be seen as an extended part of the independent study and will allow the student to develop ideas and undertake research in an area of public health of their choosing. (K1-6, S1-5).

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the programme learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

- 1. Formative assessments**
Students will be given the opportunity to prepare written work, undertake exercises and give oral and written presentations. These will develop key skills and enable the student to judge their progress and understanding before summative assessments.
- 2. Summative assessment**
An end of module written assignment assesses most units. These include essays undertaken as part of coursework and critical appraisal of relevant documents. Although there will be unseen examinations these assessments will contribute only a minority of marks for most modules.
- 3. Dissertation**
The dissertation assesses the ability to develop a research question, undertake an appropriate literature review and conduct a small research project.

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

The requirements of the Faculty of Public Health:

<https://www.fph.org.uk/training-careers/specialty-training/>

The regulations of the Diploma in Dental Public Health of the Royal College of Surgeons

The competencies of a specialist in Dental Public Health outlined by the Joint Meeting of Dental Faculties of the UK Royal Colleges of Surgeons:

https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/-/media/files/rcs/fds/dental-curricula/dental-public-health-specialty-training-curriculum-2023_a.pdf

The mission statement of the University of Sheffield as presented in the corporate plan

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ourplan/>

University Vision and Strategic Plan

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/vision>

20. Programme structure and regulations

The MDPH programme may be studied full-time over one year or part-time for not less than *two* years and shall be subject to a time limit of *five* years. The programme comprises of eight modules listed in (a) below and a dissertation (b). The modules will be delivered during normal working hours.

A candidate who has been awarded one hundred and twenty credits will be eligible for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Dental Public Health.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Dental Public Health shall be pursued full-time for *one* year and part-time for not less than *two* years and shall be subject to a time limit of *five* years. Candidate shall take units with a total value of 60 credits. A candidate who has been awarded 60 credits in respect of units listed at (a) will be eligible for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate in Dental Public Health.

- a) CDH601 Introduction to Public Health -15 credits
DEN424 Dental Public Health: Foundations, Theory, Application and Critique - 30 credits
HAR6021 Health Promotion -15 credits
DEN601 Research Methods in Clinical Dentistry - 15 credits
DEN610 Health & Social Justice - 15 credits
HAR6016 The Sociology of Health & Illness - 15 credits
HAR6035 Introduction to Statistics and Critical Appraisal - 15 credits.
- b) CDH6003 Dissertation - 60 credits.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available online at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/regs>

21. Student development over the course of study

The modules are ordered to enable students to develop skills at critical appraisal and understanding of research techniques at an earlier stage. This is in order to allow maximum time for the students to develop their dissertation proposal.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available [on the course webpage](#)

The course is suitable for candidates from a dental or other health-related background. A recognised health-related degree or a relevant professional qualification is required. International students will be required to attain a 6.5 overall with a minimum of 6.0 in each component on the IELTS or TOEFL equivalent.

23. Additional information

As well as skills in DPH, Law and Ethics and Behavioural Science in relation to Dentistry, the School of Clinical Dentistry has world-class expertise in all aspects of Clinical Dentistry, Neuroscience, Oral Pathology, Microbiology and Cell Biology, Materials Science and Education. The School has links with local and national NHS organisations and the Department of Health. Several specialists in DPH from the Yorkshire and South, West and East Yorkshire have honorary contracts with the School and are involved with providing and developing teaching. The School also has strong links with primary dental care providers across South Yorkshire through its innovative and longstanding dental outreach training.

As well as public health, Medicine and Population Health's skills lie in health economics, operational research, management sciences, epidemiology, medical statistics, information science, general practice and primary care, mental health and rehabilitation. Medicine and Population Health conducts applied and methodological health services research and teaching for health services staff with its close contacts with the Department of Health and NHS health authorities and trusts. Medicine and Population Health supports statutory health bodies overseas and has partnership arrangements with the far east, and, through its European Office, with other leading universities and institutions in Europe. Accommodation is in the modern purpose-built Regent Court, with satellites in the nearby Innovation Centre and Portobello Centre and at Northern General Hospital.

Students will have access to the specialist Medicine and Population Health library which houses a collection of

books, journals and grey literature for health and social care.

The Dental School in Sheffield was first established in the early 1900s, and Sheffield University has been awarding a degree in Dental Surgery since 1922. The current Dental School building was opened in 1992.

On the ground floor of the School there is a 120-seat lecture theatre which was upgraded in 2018 and is equipped with up-to-date audio-visual equipment. There are also six seminar/tutorial rooms, an IT Suite with 20 workstations and an internet café / common room. All our academic units have study rooms for use by postgraduate students and all have access to computer facilities and wireless connectivity.

On the second floor of the School there is a 54-unit Clinical Skills Laboratory with a dental chair for demonstrations via a live video link and computers offering computer aided learning packages. There is also a virtual reality dental operating simulator suite. In the annexe to the School, we have a Dental Technology Laboratory with associated materials processing facilities.

In 2009, the School opened a new wing which houses purpose-built and state of the art research laboratories for cell and tissue culture, microbiology, electron microscopy, histology, histochemistry and immuno-cytochemistry, biochemistry, molecular biology, proteomics and materials science.

The Dental School is connected to the recently redeveloped Charles Clifford Dental Hospital. Completed in 2009, the redevelopment included the upgrading of many areas within the hospital including new clinical facilities.

The various clinical departments are equipped with dental units in both open clinics and small side clinics. Facilities for treatment under inhalation anaesthesia, as well as conscious sedation and recovery, are available. The Dental Hospital has a well-equipped radiography department, and we also have our own oral pathology laboratories which provide support services for all clinical areas. A dental production laboratory supports both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and learning as well as providing National Health Service treatment. All these clinical facilities are used by undergraduate and postgraduate dental students. All students are provided with clinical attire. Changing rooms and canteen facilities are available in the basement of the Dental Hospital.

For further information, prospective students are directed to the School web pages at <http://shef.ac.uk/dentalschool/>

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme-specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services website at www.shef.ac.uk/ssid