

GUIDELINES FOR SPH5890 INDEPENDENT STUDY MODULE

The Independent Study Module (ISM) is designed to provide opportunities for students to pursue interests and areas of study not addressed in existing modules. Students may elect to focus on any one of the pre-approved areas of study. Specific learning objectives will be defined by the student in consultation with a supervisor, who should be an NUS academic staff member. Modes of learning may include content-based /didactic activities, practical work related to health program development or evaluation, or research in an area relevant to the chosen specialisation. The overall objective is to allow candidates to further tailor their learning experience according to their needs.

The following areas of study, and their corresponding codes, are offered:

SPH5890A	Epidemiology and Disease Control
SPH5890B	Quantitative Methods
SPH5890C	Environmental / Occupational Health
SPH5890D	Health Policy and Systems
SPH5890E	Health Services Research
SPH5890F	Health Promotion
SPH5890G	Global Health

APPLYING FOR AN ISM

Duration

It is envisaged that learning will take place via tutorials, discussions, practical work, fieldwork, preparation of reports or written assignments. The workload (including self-study and preparation) should justify the number of credits to be earned (4MCs = 10 hours/week over one semester).

ISM proposal (mandatory) (Maximum 5,000 words)

The student must have a well-defined area of interest to pursue within the framework of the ISM and submit a detailed ISM proposal with the following sections:

- a) Details of the faculty member supervising the student;
- b) Overall learning objective(s) of the ISM [specify relevance to the core competencies of the MPH programme (ref Table 1) and the area of study identified under ISM
- c) Specific area of study and/or project to be undertaken during ISM
 - i) ISM title
 - ii) Background summary of the issue/topics that are the focus of the course, including their importance within the context of public health
 - iii) ISM objectives – objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART), and should link to the learning objective(s)
 - iv) Description of the final product envisioned for the independent study
 - v) If the independent study involves research, provide a description of the hypotheses to be evaluated and an overview of the methods.
- d) Detailed description of the work plan to achieve objectives identified in (b.)
 - i) specify frequency/duration of face-to-face contact with faculty;
 - ii) specify total effort in hours;
 - iii) include bibliography – annotated.

Final report (Maximum 5,000 words, excluding references)

This is to be based on mutual agreement between supervisor and student, depending on the nature and topic of study. Typically, ISM final products are similar in format to the final practicum report. Report submission date will be assigned when application is approved.

Modes of Learning

It is envisaged that learning will take place via discussions, practical work, fieldwork, preparation of reports or written assignments. The workload (including self-study and preparation) should justify the number of credits to be earned (4MCs = 10 hours/week over one semester).

Students who wish to combine the ISM with their Practicum module will be expected to complete a substantive research project and submit a dissertation (not exceeding 10,000 words) in place of the Practicum report. This dissertation will be graded and, together with attendance at the Practicum seminar series, will fulfil the requirements for both modules (8 MCs in total).

Assessment

The final report will be graded by the academic supervisor as well as the MPH Programme Director.

Table 1. Core competencies for the MPH programme

Estimate the burden, and identify patterns and determinants of disease and ill-health in communities
Apply appropriate research methods and analytic tools to identify solutions to address community health and healthcare related problems
Apply concepts and methods in social and behavioural sciences to evaluate and inform development of health promotion policies, programmes and services
Apply knowledge of health systems, policy and financing, health economics and key global health issues to evaluate and inform development of public health policies, programmes and services
Take into consideration ethical and legal principles in public health practice and policy
Communicate public health research evidence effectively to different audiences
Understand own professional strengths and personal skills to lead and work collaboratively in a public health team