

Course Co-ordination:

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The development and implementation of cost-effective interventions to reduce the burden of specific health problems is a key element of public health. The objective of this Master in Public Health with orientation Disease Control (MDC) is to train health managers in disease control in developing countries.

The training is based on the following principles:

- Pursuit of technical excellence (medical and methodological)
- Pragmatic approach to health policy, programme design and health system development
- Solidarity and commitment to contribute to universal health goals.

The course draws on the unique expertise of the ITM and combines in-depth knowledge of specific diseases with extensive know-how on applied epidemiology and health services organisation. The course teaches quantitative and qualitative methods for the appraisal of health problems, concepts, strategies and tools for specific interventions. Depending on the option, participants will gain a thorough knowledge in tropical disease control or in reproductive health.

2. OBJECTIVES

The general objectives stem from the “ideal” profile of the disease control/reproductive health programme manager.

The course will allow the participants to develop:

- Knowledge and skills for evidence-based disease control strategy and health policy formulation
- The capacity to appraise and interact with the health systems environment
- Skills for disease control/reproductive health programme management and evaluation
- Communication and negotiation skills
- An attitude of commitment towards health goals based on medical ethics and human rights.

3. COURSE PROGRAMME

The course consists of four consecutive periods of fifteen, eight, ten and nine weeks each. During the first two periods, the core programme, composed of three major components, provides students with quantitative and qualitative skills for the assessment and analysis of health problems and health-related interventions, with the concepts and methods of health services organization and with competencies in research and communication.

In the third period the students have to choose one of the two options, Reproductive Health or Tropical Diseases, during which the evidence on specific health problems is reviewed and programme management tools and skills are applied on specific health programmes in different health systems and socio cultural contexts. These modules are also offered as stand-alone short courses to external participants and more information

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and an application form can be obtained from the course secretariat MDC-MCM@itg.be or from the ITM website www.itg.be.

During the fourth period the students will write a thesis and defend it before an international jury during the final examination.

Course components and modules (60 Credits)

Component 1: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods (15 Credits)

- Basic epidemiology and statistics
- Data analysis 1
- Applied epidemiology
- Advanced statistical methods
- Data analysis 2 (non compulsory)
- Demography
- Qualitative methods

Component 2: Public Health (10 credits)

- Basic concepts in public health
- Health service organisation
- Economical tools
- Methods for analysing health problems
- Interface health services and programmes
- National health systems and health policy
- Analysis of decision making
- Management and evaluation of programmes

Component 3: Research & Tools (5 credits)

- Study design and critical reading
- Ethics of research and research proposals
- Bibliography
- Communication
- Informatics (non compulsory)

Component 4: Option Tropical Diseases (TD) OR Option Reproductive Health (RH) (15 credits)

- HIV/AIDS module (in both options)
- Project Cycle Management and Logical Framework (in both options)

TD modules:

- Malaria
- Tuberculosis
- Neglected Diseases

RH modules:

- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Family Planning and safe abortions
- Maternal Health

Component 5: Thesis (15 credits)

- Thesis writing and defence

This postgraduate programme represents a study load of 1.600 to 1.800 hours, which is equivalent to 60 ECTS credits.

4. TEACHING METHODS

Teaching methods include interactive lectures, individual and group work, problem-based learning and discussion sessions. There will be a strong emphasis on case studies and practical exercises involving participants in the design of control programmes appropriate to their country of origin. Small group sessions are a substantial part of the course. Senior staff from the Institute's departments (Public Health, Microbiology, Parasitology, Clinical Sciences) teaches most of the modules. Distinguished external lecturers complement specific areas of expertise.

5. EVALUATION AND DEGREE

Individual progress, i.e. oral communication skills, participation in discussions and teamwork, is continuously assessed. During the first and second period participants will take written tests for each specific module.

At the end of the third period students present the results of their personal project in a poster format which will be assessed on its content, methodology and format.

From the second period onwards, the students write a thesis, preferably on data they bring from their home country. A promoter is assigned to each student. The thesis will be defended before an international jury composed of course directors and external experts.

The Degree of Master of Public Health orientation Disease Control is awarded to participants who have successfully passed the tests and completed and defended their thesis. Students who participated in all activities but failed to pass exams or meet the thesis requirements receive a Certificate of Attendance.

6. DURATION OF THE COURSE AND LANGUAGE

The MDC is a 10 months course, taking place from half September until half July. The course language is French or English, alternating yearly (see overview table).

7. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The MDC is intended for health professionals working in ministries of health, international agencies or non-governmental organisations in low and middle-income countries.

A university degree, two years or more of relevant experience (related to tropical disease control or reproductive health) and proficiency in the course language are required to be eligible for admission.

A good knowledge of the course language (French or English), certified by an accredited test or equivalent is required. Participants of the French course are expected to have a working knowledge of English.

The application form (available from the course secretariat MDC-MCM@itg.be or from the ITM website www.itg.be) should reach the course secretariat before January 31. A selection committee evaluates all applications on a comparative basis, and candidates will be notified of the result.

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Students admitted to the course may be asked to present an official translation of their diploma.

Those interested in participating only in the specific options of period 3, offered as stand-alone short courses, are requested to contact either the course secretariat (MDC-MCM@itg.be) for information and the application form or consult www.itg.be.

8. ACCREDITATION

The Master of Public Health, orientation Disease Control (MDC) is internationally accredited through the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (www.nvao.net).

9. TUITION FEE AND SCHOLARSHIPS

You will find information on the exact fee and scholarships in the general ITM course overview and on our website or you can contact the ITM Student Service at education@itg.be.

Students from developing countries and the European Union are eligible for a scholarship through the ITM.

Your registration fee should be paid into the ITM's account nr. 220-0531111-72 (Fortis, Warandeborg 3, 1000 Brussel), BIC/SWIFT : GEBABEBB, IBAN BE 38 2200 5311 1172. Bank charges are at the expense of the applicant.

Note: For this international Master course an increased tuition fee (see table) includes a subsidised portable computer with wireless technology (market value approx. 1.300 Euro). This is an initiative of the ITM to promote ICT compatibility between students and with the Institute's hotspots and e-environment. All ITM fellowships will include this feature and we advise other funding agencies to do the same. This computer remains the property of the student.

10. ALUMNI NETWORK

The International Network of former MDC and HSMP participants stimulates contacts between former participants and the Institute. The Network produces two newsletters per year and offers a book service. The lecturers of the ITM remain available for academic advice. The association also supports national and regional meetings of local alumni associations.