



**MASTERS IN PHILOSOPHY – OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH  
(MPhil – Occ. Health)**

**TRAINING PROGRAMME AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

**CONVENOR:**

**DR ROSLYNN BAATJIES**

*MTech (Environmental Health), MPH (Occupational Hygiene), PhD*

**PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATOR: LYNNE HARPER**

**OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE DIVISION**

**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**- JANUARY 2026 -**

# OVERVIEW OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

## I. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A candidate shall not be admitted to the programme unless he/she: (a) holds an MBChB degree, an honours degree, a four-year bachelor's degree, or a relevant NQF 8 qualification in an approved discipline; and (b) has access to relevant places of work and/or experience in occupational health clinical practice, occupational hygiene, health and safety, management, inspection, or auditing.

## II. STRUCTURE AND DURATION OF PROGRAMME

A candidate shall be registered for at least two years of part-time study and is required to complete three courses of the Postgraduate Diploma in Occupational Health (DOH) programme (occupational health risk assessment and management; occupational medicine and work ability; and occupational health services management, ethics and legislation) and complete required coursework in Epidemiology and Biostatistics for Occupational Health, and Research Methods for Occupational Health over the two-year period. The courses are offered face-to-face in block sessions over the two-year period. Attendance is compulsory and constitutes a DP requirement.

You will be assigned a research supervisor to advise you throughout the research process until the submission of your dissertation. Students are advised to be in regular (monthly) contact with their supervisor to ensure that they are progressing through all components of the research process including the literature search, protocol development and dissertation write-up.

## III. OUTLINE OF COURSES

| Code       | Course  | NQF Credits | HEQSF Level | Face to face block classes* | Face to face block classes** |
|------------|---|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| PPH4072F   | Occupational health risk assessment and management              | 20          | 8           | March (year 1)              | -                            |
| PPH4071S   | Occupational medicine and work ability                          | 20          | 8           | July (year 1)               | -                            |
| PPH4070F   | Occupational health services management, ethics and legislation | 20          | 8           | February (year 2)           | -                            |
| PPH7103F/S | Epidemiology and Biostatistics for Occupational Health          | 30          | 9           | March (yr 1)                |                              |
| PPH7104F/S | Research Methods for Occupational Health                        | 30          | 9           |                             | July (yr 1)                  |
| PPH7060W   | Occupational Health Minor Dissertation                          | 60          | 9           | -                           | -                            |
|            | <b>Total NQF credits</b>  | <b>180</b>  |             |                             |                              |

Refer to the Postgraduate Diploma in Occupational Health Programme document on the website: [http://www.publichealth.uct.ac.za/phfm\\_postgraduate-diploma-occupational-health](http://www.publichealth.uct.ac.za/phfm_postgraduate-diploma-occupational-health).

\* For students registered for the MPhil (OH), without prior completion of the PGDOH

\*\* For students already in possession of a PGDOH obtained from any university

**Students who have previously completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Occupational Health (PGDOH) will be exempted from the following 3 courses:**

- PPH4072F Occupational Health risk assessment and management
- PPH4071S Occupational medicine and work ability
- PPH4070F Occupational health services management, ethics and legislation

#### **IV. DETAILS OF COURSES**

##### **i) Epidemiology and Biostatistics for Occupational Health (PPH7103F/S)**

The course aims to introduce the principles and methods of epidemiology and biostatistics and its application to occupational health, and to develop proficiency in occupational epidemiological analytic methods using statistical software.

The course covers all the key principles and the application of key concepts in occupational epidemiology and biostatistics in order to conduct epidemiologic and exposure assessment studies.

At the end of the course candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge of:

- The nature and uses of epidemiology in occupational health
- The strengths and limitations of epidemiological study designs in occupational contexts
- The epidemiological approach to defining and measuring exposures and the occurrence of health-related states in the working population
- The epidemiological approach to assessing study validity and disease causation in the occupational context
- Causation, measures of occurrence and measures of association
- A deeper understanding of confounding and how confounding is controlled for in epidemiological research, and the uses and limitations of matching in analytical studies
- The ability to integrate and apply different epidemiological concepts to provide a thorough critique of study design, conduct and analysis of occupational studies

Furthermore, candidates will develop a specialist understanding and application of occupational epidemiological approaches using appropriate statistical software.

- Descriptive statistics
- Inferential statistical procedures including modelling
- Critical interpretation of statistical output

##### **Course Syllabus:**

###### **a) Epidemiology component:**

- Types of study designs
- Random error, bias and confounding
- Overview of study design and epidemiologic principles
- Measures of disease occurrence and disease association
- Approaches to the assessment of causality
- Bias and validity
- Confounding

- Effect measure modification
- Exposure assessment in occupational epidemiology
- Case studies in occupational epidemiology

**b) Biostatistics component:**

- Populations and samples, and sampling methods
- Descriptive measures and graphical techniques
- Distributions
- Estimation: Point and Interval estimation
- Hypothesis testing
- Power, Effect, and Sample size
- Measures of effect – risk ratio and odds ratio
- Multiple linear regression for modelling and identifying the relationship between a continuous response and a set of risk factors
- Logistic regression for modelling and analysing the relationship between a dichotomous indicator of disease status and a set of risk factors

**ii) Research Methods for Occupational Health (PPH7104F/S)**

The course is aimed at candidates who wish to develop a broad understanding of quantitative research methods and its application in occupational health research in a career that requires skills in collecting, understanding, synthesising and reporting of epidemiological data or other quantitative data sources.

Upon completion of this course, students will demonstrate the following competencies:

- Identifying a work-related health problem, formulating a study hypothesis, developing research objectives and formulating an appropriate study design
- Producing an evidence-based literature review
- Developing a protocol that includes the method for doing the research project with due consideration to the ethical issues that may arise
- Developing a questionnaire or appropriate data collection instrument to collect meaningful data
- How to collect and accurately analyse data using statistical software
- How to interpret results and develop a critique
- How to write a scientific article for a peer-reviewed publication

**Course Syllabus:**

The course aims to enable students to successfully carry out an occupational health research project of a work-related health problem through writing a detailed research proposal that uses quantitative research methods by:

- enabling students to formulate pertinent research questions and hypotheses pertinent to occupational health

- promoting research reading, review and writing skills (including citation and scientific argument) for purposes of research proposals
- introducing students to best data handling practices post data collection, data analysis approaches, sharing and reporting of data
- Identify the study problem: the research process, formulating the research question, developing the study objectives
- The literature review: developing the search items, conduct the literature search, summarising the review, referencing the articles, writing up the literature review
- Study design and protocol: outline of research protocol, choosing a study design, study population, sampling and subject selection; sample size calculations, dummy tables, ethical issues and reporting of results, timelines and budgets, writing up the protocol
- Measurement (collecting and analysing data): study instruments, questionnaire design, validity and reliability of data collection instruments, data collection, piloting
- Data management and manipulation: coding and data entry, descriptive statistics and correlational analysis, bivariate and multivariate analysis, producing final tables, using statistical software
- Interpreting research findings: summarising main findings, developing a critique, revisiting study objectives
- Writing a research manuscript for publication: identifying an appropriate journal, scientific writing of a manuscript

### iii) Human Research Ethics Training - compulsory

In line with the current National Human Research Ethics guidelines, the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has introduced **a mandatory research ethics training requirement** for all investigators conducting research with human participants, their data, or samples at UCT.

This includes all students conducting research (undergraduate, postgraduate, honours, master's, PhD). All MPhil (OH) students are required to fulfil this requirement as well.

The recognised training for this course as mandated by HREC is the **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)** - Available on the **SuccessFactors Learning Platform** (free for UCT staff, postdocs, master's, and doctoral students).

<http://www.successfactors.uct.ac.za/>

The **two required modules** are:

- Module 4: Research Involving Human Participants
  - Module 5: Managing and Sharing Human Research Data
- Other accepted training:

A certificate must be provided as evidence of having completed the two modules (required pass mark is 80%). This certificate must be uploaded on Amathuba as a course requirement. It must accompany the HREC application forms and research protocol in order to obtain approval prior to the student conducting their research. All students must renew their certification every 3 years should they not have completed their research by that time.

## V. MPHIL (OH) PROGRAMME MEETINGS AND RESOURCES (VULA PLATFORM)

Programme *group meetings* will be held with registered students over the two-year period, with at least one meeting per semester. Attendance of the meetings are compulsory. The meetings will be used to ascertain and facilitate engagement with students on matters related to registration, academic course work, quizzes/assignments and research projects. In addition, the meetings will provide insight into each student's progress with regard to their respective research projects. This will enable focussed support and guidance to ensure students are progressing through all the components of the course. Meeting records, learning materials and resources that the student will required to engage with, will be on the VULA/Amatuba platform. One student class representative will also be elected by the class.

## VI. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH MINOR DISSERTATION

### Learning outcomes (LO)

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| LO1 | Identify the work-related health problem and formulate a study hypothesis and research objectives | As part of Research Methods for OH course |
| LO2 | Produce an evidence-based literature review   | As part of Research Methods for OH course |
| LO3 | Develop a protocol, questionnaire and study instruments   | As part of Research Methods for OH course |
| LO4 | Collect and accurately analyse data statistically   | As part of Minor Dissertation             |
| LO5 | Interpreting results and developing a critique  | As part of Minor Dissertation             |
| LO6 | Write a scientific paper for a peer-reviewed publication  | As part of Minor Dissertation             |

### Learning activities

| Sequence/Order | Learning activity title                       | Learning activity description             | Course component                   |
|----------------|---|---|------------------------------------|
| 1              | <i>Identify the study problem</i>             | The research process                      | As part of Research Methods course |
| 2              |   | Define your study problem?                |                                    |
| 3              |   | Developing your study objectives          |                                    |
| 4              | <i>Literature review</i>                      | How to develop search items               | As part of Research Methods course |
| 5              |   | How to conduct a literature review        |                                    |
| 6              |   | How to summarise and write up a review    |                                    |
| 7              |   | Referencing your articles                 |                                    |
| 8              |   | Write up your literature review           |                                    |
| 9              | <i>Study design, protocol and instruments</i> | The outline of a research protocol        | As part of Research Methods course |
| 10             |   | Study designs                             |                                    |
| 11             |   | Sample size calculations and dummy tables |                                    |
| 12             |   | Ethical issues and reporting results      |                                    |
| 13             |   | Timelines and budgets                     |                                    |

|    |  |   |                               |
|----|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 14 |  | Write up your protocol                                  |                               |
| 15 |  | Developing a questionnaire and coding systems           |                               |
| 16 |  | Designing other data collection tools                   |                               |
| 17 |  | Consent forms   |                               |
| 18 | <i>Collect and analyse data</i>                      | Apply for Faculty Human Research Ethics (HREC) approval | As part of Minor Dissertation |
| 19 |  | Coding and data management                              |                               |
| 20 |  | Descriptive statistics and correlations                 |                               |
| 21 |  | Bivariate and multivariate analysis                     |                               |
| 22 |  | Produce your final tables                               |                               |
| 23 | <i>Interpreting research findings</i>                | Summarising the main findings                           | As part of Minor Dissertation |
| 24 |  | Critically discussing the results                       |                               |
| 25 |  | Revisiting the study objectives                         |                               |
| 26 | <i>Writing a research manuscript for publication</i> | Identifying an appropriate journal                      | As part of Minor Dissertation |
| 27 |  | Writing your manuscript                                 | As part of Minor Dissertation |

Students will be provided with Faculty Guidelines for the protocol and minor dissertation to guide them.

## VII. ASSESSMENT

Assessment of coursework is by means of written assignments / portfolios, quizzes, and written examination. A pass of 50% is required for each course. The dissertation is externally examined. In addition, the examiners retain the discretion to alter any mark based on assessment of the candidate's performance during the programme (or course components) as a whole.

### Coursework

- i) Epidemiology and Biostatistics for Occupational Health (PPH7103F/S)
- ii) Research Methods for Occupational Health (PPH7104F/S)

- Assessment will consist of a combination of formative assessment (take-home assignments) and a final examination (summative). The examination carries 50% of the assessment weight. The examination for the course will be written at the end of the semester.
- A pass mark of 50% is required overall, with a 45% sub-minimum for the formative (assignments) and summative (final examination) components separately.
- An external examiner is appointed for the course.
- Candidates may be allowed to repeat a course once if they have failed.
- No supplementary examinations will be offered to candidates who fail a course.

## Progression

Except by permission of the Senate, a candidate registered for a MPhil in Occupational Health may be refused readmission if they:

- fail two or more of the coursework courses for which he/she is registered in any year of study;
- fail a core coursework course (Research Methods in Occupational Health) more than once;
- have not completed the coursework within the first two years of first registration for the degree;
- have not submitted a final research proposal by the beginning of the third year of study since first registration for the degree;
- have not completed the required dissertation within four years of first registration for the degree.

## Distinction

The degree will be awarded with distinction to candidates who average 75% or above on coursework plus dissertation, with a 70% sub-minimum on each component (i.e. at least 70% average across all courses and at least 70% on the dissertation) and passing all courses at first attempt. The student obtaining the highest mark in the final examination for that particular cohort, will receive the GEOFF CAMPBELL award.

## VIII. RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS / COMPUTER SOFTWARE

**1. Epidemiology: A research manual for South Africa.** G. Joubert, L. Myer. Fourth Edition, ISBN: 9780190758691

For further details: <https://www.oxford.co.za/book/9780190758691-epidemiology-a-research-manual-for-africa-4e#.Yqq6B3ZBw2w>

**2. Research methods in occupational epidemiology.** Checkoway H., Pearce N., Kriebel D. 2004, Second Edition. Print ISBN-13: 9780195092424

For Further details:

<https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195092424.001.0001/acprof-9780195092424>

**3. STATA Statistical software (for course PPH7104F/S on Research Methods for Occupational Health)**

Each student will be required to purchase STATA for purposes of data management and analysis. The software can be purchased during the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) year prior to starting the data analysis. There are various options available for student licences as per the table below. Depending on your requirements and possible future use, you can decide which package is most appropriate for you. It is recommended that you purchase the STATA/BE (basic edition) – and at minimum, a one-year licence. The STATA license can be installed without problems on Windows, Mac and/or Unix.

Contact details for purchase:

Mariette van der Merwe

Location: 424A Sussex Ave | Lynnwood | Pretoria | 0081 | South Africa

Tel: +27 87 183 1873 | Cell: +27 82 415 4426

email: [mariette@quantec.co.za](mailto:mariette@quantec.co.za)/[pieter@quantec.co.za](mailto:pieter@quantec.co.za), website: [www.quantec.co.za](http://www.quantec.co.za)

**Prices quoted for 2026**

**Stata 19 Prof+ Plan and Student single-user pricing in SA Rand; VAT inclusive.** Delivery via electronic download; all copies of Stata include Complete Documentation provided in PDF format only.

| <b>Students</b>     |                    |                   |                   |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>License Type</b> | <b>6-month lic</b> | <b>1-year lic</b> | <b>Perpetual</b>  |
| <b>Stata/BE</b>     | <b>R940.00</b>     | <b>R1 840.00</b>  | <b>R3 620.00</b>  |
| <b>Stata/SE</b>     | <b>R1 860.00</b>   | <b>R3 500.00</b>  | <b>R6 950.00</b>  |
| <b>Stata/MP2</b>    |                    | <b>R5 380.00</b>  | <b>R10 560.00</b> |
| <b>Stata/MP4</b>    |                    | <b>R7 340.00</b>  | <b>R14 470.00</b> |

Students only, proof of registration required prior to order being placed.