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Selection criteria is summarised as follows:

- Normally a relevant healthcare professional qualification
- A first degree with Honours or the equivalent international qualification
- A minimum of two years’ post-registration experience (candidates with less than two years’ experience will be considered on a case by case basis)
- International English Language Test Score (IELTS) of 6.0 for non-English speakers
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) will apply

Basic knowledge of research is important for this course. Those who have not completed a research module in previous courses of study, or have the accredited experiential learning, may be required to study an online Introduction to Research course at the University of South Wales. Details of this can be obtained from the Course Director.

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MSc Disaster Healthcare
Postgraduate Certificate (Disaster Healthcare)
Postgraduate Diploma (Disaster Healthcare)

Course aims
This course aims to prepare healthcare professionals for leadership roles in disaster situations worldwide.

About the course
The course provides opportunities for students to progress towards the award of Master of Science (MSc), but with the option of exiting the course at the end of year one with a Postgraduate Certificate, or at the end of year two with a Postgraduate Diploma. The award is a University of South Wales MSc delivered in collaboration with Häme Polytechnic, Finland. The full MSc course is a three-year, part-time, postgraduate e-learning course.

It is a multi-national and multi-professional course that is studied simultaneously by students in different countries through e-learning. This arrangement presents the challenge of working with students from other cultures and other disciplines. It provides the necessary foundation for working in disaster relief healthcare.

“I am currently the medical programme co-ordinator in the Emergency Surgical Centre in Battambang, Cambodia. This is a good course to get in contact with people with a similar way of thinking and to share previous experiences from missions abroad. The theoretical part of this course was very interesting and the practical training gave good tips on surviving in the disaster areas for those with no experience from disasters. The teaching staff were very supportive and everything was well planned for the theoretical lectures.”

Merja Heitto (Tasanen)
MSc Disaster Relief Nursing – Graduate

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University of South Wales
Disaster Healthcare Courses

Disaster simulation / survival training

Simulations of the types of chaotic situations encountered during disasters will be arranged during the final week of the Summer School.

These simulated events provide opportunities for students to develop skills in assessment, planning and decision making. Other key skills that will be developed include the ability to work in teams, creativity, adaptability, flexibility and problem solving skills. The focus will be on safety and survival, and the ability to achieve objectives in a team environment. All simulations will provide opportunity for personal reflection and the development of competencies required to function in the disaster situation.

Please note that students are expected to purchase waterproof hill walking boots, warm but light waterproof outdoor clothing for use during the survival and disaster simulation exercises. It’s important that you assess the type of climate that you will be living and working in, as you will be outdoors for long periods. Preliminary skills in map reading and compass use are desirable. A reasonable level of physical fitness is required.

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Educational aims of the programme

Postgraduate Certificate:
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- Conduct an in-depth analysis of the public health risks contingent, including difficulties in nutrition requirements, water supply and waste disposal that occur during disasters.
- Develop the knowledge and principles required to manage, facilitate and co-ordinate prompt and effective disaster management within a multiprofessional and multicultural environment.

Postgraduate Diploma:
- Demonstrate competence in the operational management of mass casualties in a disaster situation.
- Develop advanced knowledge and skills in harnessing local and personal resources to meet the immediate and long-term mental health needs of survivors, and participate in the provision of support networks for personnel.
- Demonstrate analytical skills in a variety of research methodologies, and their application to the disaster setting.

MSc:
- Using a selected research methodology, critically analyse a component of disaster response applicable to individual practice.
- Inform and enhance the knowledge base for healthcare in disaster settings.

Course structure

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<td></td>
<td>Summer School</td>
<td>44 days</td>
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Disaster Healthcare Courses

Course content

Year One
Year One has three modules, providing students with the core concepts related to disaster relief.

Principles and Concepts in Disasters concentrates on the analysis of case examples of disasters and introduces frameworks for analysis.

Protecting Public Health in Disasters is aimed at developing knowledge and skills related to public health and nutrition needs of individuals, groups and families in disaster situations.

Management and Leadership of Disasters is divided into two modules, Personal Preparation for Disasters and Professional Development for Disaster. The first focuses on communication, teamwork and personal safety. The second module introduces students to leadership theories related to disasters. Both these modules are strongly associated with the Disaster Simulation Exercises and the different roles that students will be assigned.

Year Two
At the beginning of Year Two, students will study:

Promoting Public Health to increase and deepen the knowledge of approaches to public health in disasters. It will also develop understanding of the relationship between environmental health, mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, epidemiology and the nutritional health of individuals, families and communities affected by disasters.

Evidence-Based Practice in Disasters provides the opportunity to revisit key research concepts and assists with the development of a research proposal for use in the field.

Year Three
This year of study is concerned with Researching and Evaluating Disasters and Professional Practice in Disasters.

Researching and Evaluating Disasters is completed in Year Three. Students are usually expected to spend up to 12 weeks working as a member of an international disaster team, in one of the world’s disaster zones. While on placement, students who do not have previous field experience will work under the supervision of an experienced healthcare professional from an aid agency. Everyone is expected to compile a poster presentation of their experience for viewing at the annual symposium.

Professional Practice in Disasters is an empirical study related to disasters and requires students to prepare an academic paper as if for publication in a refereed journal or book. The findings of the research study will be presented at a Disaster Relief Symposium, which is held every year as part of the Summer School.

Teaching and learning methods

As mature experienced professionals, students come to this course with a wide variety of personal and professional experiences and backgrounds.

Teaching and learning methods in this programme aim to achieve a balance between the need to enhance student knowledge, attitudes, values and skills, while recognising that students are able to contribute significantly to their own learning and that of their peers.

The central educational philosophy that the programme embraces is the pre-eminence of teaching and learning strategies that are student-centred, self-directed and peer-sharing. Students will be expected to take full responsibility for their learning.

Teaching is based on adult learning principles that recognise the fundamental importance of building on skills and knowledge students have gained in previous clinical experience and learning.

E-learning

Students will require e-learning materials to mediate the teaching and learning activities of this course, as there will be times when teachers and students will be physically separate from each other.

Each module of study will contain a substantial distance-learning element that will take the form of a study guide. The study guide for each module will be presented on the e-learning platform via the internet.

The guide will introduce students to a variety of resource materials on the internet and in literature, which supports them to meet specific learning outcomes. Online discussions and seminars will form a major part of the e-learning environment.

Full participation in these activities is essential for success on the course and personal development.

“I chose this course as it encompassed both my interest in nursing and also my degree in Social (Human) Geography. My experience was good. I also had the opportunity to go to Ireland and Finland to learn. I loved this course.”

Judith Barnes
MSc Disaster Relief Nursing – Graduate

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