

An overhead view of a group of students sitting on the floor in a library, looking at a book together. A bookshelf is visible on the left side of the image.

# Subject Benchmark Statement: Health Studies

## The Basics

This summary is designed to provide a short and accessible overview of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Health Studies for students, employers and academics. It is not intended to replace or alter the Subject Benchmark Statement, which should be referred to in the design and approval of courses and when any further detail is required.

Subject Benchmark Statements describes the nature of the study subject and the benchmark academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas, and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their course or programme.

Subject Benchmark Statements are presented in four sections. Section 1 outlines the contextual information - providing the operational landscape, and boundaries, of subject discipline. This includes consideration of the ways in which the discipline addresses wider social goals, specifically in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI); the requirements for inclusivity for learners with diverse abilities; education for sustainable development (ESD); as well as enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Section 2 covers distinctive features of the course, including curriculum design, partnership arrangements, flexibility of delivery, progression and ongoing monitoring processes. Section 3 explains any features relevant to teaching, learning and assessment activities for the subject. Section 4 describes the benchmark standards of achievement reached by all graduates with a bachelor's degree with honours in the subject, with some subjects also including achievement at master's level.



## Why study a degree in Health Studies?

Health Studies, as an academic subject, encompasses the daily life experiences of all individuals across the whole life-course, and diverse communities locally, nationally and globally.

As a subject discipline, Health Studies represents a broad area that draws from a range of disciplines, reflecting the broad study of human health, including ill health and diseases, physical health, and mental health and wellbeing. The discipline encompasses social, cultural and environmental dimensions - covering local, national and global contexts and perspectives.

Within the subject of Health Studies, courses are informed by research and evidence-based practice and include diverse and innovative methodological approaches. Relevant stakeholders in the curriculum ecosystem are involved in planning, development, delivery and evaluation of courses. Various degrees and pathways provide students with the opportunity to develop skills and acquire knowledge and expertise which pave the way to a wide range of employment opportunities for graduates.



## What are the main teaching and learning approaches in Health Studies?

Teaching, learning and assessment styles in the discipline involve blended learning that links theory and practice in a meaningful way. Teaching strategies aim at inclusivity to ensure the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills, as well as broader transferable graduate skills.

There is also a focus on critical evaluation and analysis to develop skills in problem-solving, decision-making and creativity. Variation in teaching styles, activities and approaches is evident in seminars, field trips and simulations, while case-based, problem-based and work-based learning are also encouraged.



## How are students assessed?

The assessment of Health Studies courses includes a mix of methods that are accessible to students with various abilities and capabilities, as well as students from varying educational and cultural backgrounds operating within different learning situations or contexts.

The range of assessment methods encountered on a course will reflect students' progression through the course and support graduate outcomes. Where individual students may be disadvantaged by particular assessment methods, adjustments to those assessments are considered in discussion with the student concerned, while ensuring fairness across the full cohort. The procedures used for assessment cover the subject knowledge, abilities and skills developed through the degree course.



## Benchmark Standards

The minimum threshold standards that a student will have demonstrated when they are awarded an honours degree in Health Studies are outlined in the Benchmark standards on **pages 22-25** of the Subject Benchmark Statement. It is expected that the vast majority of students will perform significantly better than the minimum threshold standards. Each higher education provider has its own method of determining what the appropriate evidence of this achievement will be and should refer to [Annex D in The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#). This Annex sets out common descriptions of the four main degree outcome classifications for bachelor's degrees with honours - 1st, 2.1, 2.2 and 3rd.

The benchmark standards provide a framework for educators in the field of Health Studies to be able to design curricula that are both quality driven and sustainable, with the standards regularly monitored and comparable to elsewhere in the sector.

The full statement was developed by subject experts drawn from across the sector, with a good representation of the subject community. Details of the Advisory Group can be found on **page 28** of the full Statement.

### Read the full Subject Benchmark Statement

The [full Subject Benchmark Statement](#) is available on the QAA website.



Subject Benchmark Statements are published in QAA's capacity as a membership organisation on behalf of the higher education sector.

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