

Notes from NAFA Symposium at Cambridge—June 28, 2006
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London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Speaker: Professor Sharon Huttly, Dean of Studies
(She has been at LSHTM for 20 years, in her current position for 6 months)

LSHTM is a very international institution:

- Students from more than 120 countries
- Alumni in more than 167 countries
- Staff from more than 37 countries

History:

London School of Hygiene founded c. 1899, was housed on a hospital ship (HMS Dreadnought) moored on the Thames.

In the 1920's the Rockefeller Foundation offered funding to establish a school of hygiene.

The two were merged to form the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Campus built in central London near the British Museum, is part of the University of London.

The new merged institution aspired to “cover the need of the whole inhabited world”.

Overview of Current LSHTM

Degrees granted are: Master of Science (MSc), MPhil, PhD, and Dr. of Public Health (DPH). There are no undergraduates at LSHTM.

There are about 865 students studying at the London campus and an additional 1500 studying through distance learning. Of the London-based students, about 41% are “overseas” students (from outside the E.U.). About 67% are female.

Distance learning is a major effort at the LSHTM and was fostered by its American Director. The earliest distance courses were conducted through paper correspondence; more recent courses are relying on the internet more extensively.

The LSHTM received a score of “5” on the most recent Research Assessment Exercise.

The institution has a commitment to research and teaching and seeks to inform policy and practice in these areas. Its mission combines vocational education with research.

Two-thirds of the funding for LSHTM comes from independent research grants; other sources of funding are tuition, council grants, and consultancy fees.

Research funding has increased. Recent research efforts include:

- Study showing safety of the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine
- Study of pneumococcal vaccine

The institution does some clinical work in conjunction with area hospitals, but is not mainly about providing treatment.

Structure and Organization

The current Director of LSHTM is Professor Sir Andy Haines.

There are three Departments:

- Department of Epidemiology and Population Health
- Department of Infectious and Tropical Diseases
- Department of Public Health and Policy

There are also ten “Centres,” which serve as horizontal links across departments. For example, there is a Centre for Global Change and Health.

There is an active alumni association.

More about Academic Programs Offered

LSHTM offers 18 Master’s courses; each takes one year of study. There are about 566 students pursuing these courses, 45 of whom are from the USA.

Assessment methods include: written exams, project reports, practical or oral exams

LSHTM offers research degrees leading to the Ph.D. and the D.P.H. (Doctor of Public Health). The M.Phil. is a milestone degree on the way to the Ph.D. Each of doctoral degrees takes 3-4 years to complete.

The Ph.D. program:

- is earned primarily through independent research
- generally involves a panel of supervisors
- may include taking master’s modules (courses in U.S. parlance) where needed
- includes fieldwork

- includes “transferable skills” training (managing projects, communication, etc.)
- requires an oral exam

Qualifications for entry into the degree programs vary. Sometimes a taught master’s degree provides a bridge into the Ph.D. programs for those whose prior academic experience is not directly related. Professional experience is taken into account as well.

The average age of students at LSHTM is in the mid-30’s.

Shorter-term courses (mid-career training) are also offered.

Funding for study

Some limited, very specialized fellowships are offered.