

First Population
Health Program in
Bangladesh

Prospectus

Master of Population Health (MPH)
Professional Degree Program

July 2026



Department of Population Sciences
University of Dhaka

Mobile: +8801766517002
+8801712529264
+8801715891488

 mph.dps@du.ac.bd

 www.mph.dpsdu.edu.bd

Contact : Room No. 4046-Ka, 3rd Floor, Arts Building, University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000

Apply



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Department of Population Sciences

Third Floor, Arts Building
University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh
Phone: 9612209; 01766517100
Email: dps@du.ac.bd
Website: www.dpsdu.edu.bd

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Chairman's Note

Population health has emerged globally as a vital framework for understanding how health and wellbeing are shaped not only by disease and services, but by broader demographic, social, environmental, and policy contexts. In Bangladesh, rapid demographic transition, urbanization, population ageing, and the growing dual burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases are redefining the country's health priorities and underscore the need for population-level, equity-focused approaches.

At the same time, Bangladesh is striving to harness its demographic dividend—an opportunity that can be realized only if the population is healthy, educated, and supported by effective and inclusive systems. Translating demographic potential into sustainable development requires a new generation of professionals who can integrate demographic insight with population health perspectives, policy analysis, and data-driven decision-making.

In response to this national and global context, the Department of Population Sciences, University of Dhaka, is pleased to introduce the Professional Master of Population Health (MPH) Program. This practice-oriented, 1.5-year, 48-credit program is designed to address a critical academic and professional gap by systematically integrating demography, public health, and epidemiology within a comprehensive population health framework. The curriculum combines rigorous theoretical foundations with applied skills, research, and emerging areas such as health informatics, artificial intelligence, climate change, and planetary health.

The program welcomes applicants from diverse academic and professional backgrounds and aims to prepare graduates for leadership and technical roles across government, research institutions, development partners, and international agencies. We are committed to delivering an intellectually rigorous and professionally relevant program that contributes to national priorities, including Universal Health Coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals, by strengthening human resources for population health.

We look forward to welcoming a diverse and motivated cohort of learners who aspire to reduce inequities, strengthen health systems, and contribute to a healthier, more resilient, and sustainable future for Bangladesh.

Professor Abu Hasanat Mohammad Kishowar Hossain

Chairman

Department of Population Sciences

University of Dhaka

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Department of Population Sciences (DPS) was established in 1998 under the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Dhaka (DU) in collaboration with UNFPA with a view to creating a cadre of trained person-power for the nation by developing skills and creative judgments in individuals for understanding and effective management of population issues through a multidisciplinary approach.
- 1.2 The Department of Population Sciences began its academic journey on 11 July 2000 by offering a Two-Year Professional Master of Population Sciences, which was later shortened to one and a half years (i.e., eighteen months) in 2013. However, the program was discontinued in 2020. Now, the Department of Population Sciences intends to reintroduce its professional program following the rules approved by the Syndicate in its meeting on March 27, 2022, for running the Professional/Executive Master's program.

2.0 Rationale for the Introduction of the Professional Master of Population Health Program

- 2.1 Bangladesh is currently working to capitalize on the demographic dividend, characterized by a growing proportion of the working-age population and a declining dependency ratio. This transition presents both potential and risk. To transform this demographic advantage into sustained social and economic development, the country must ensure that its population is not only productive but also healthy, educated, and well governed. Health, education, economic policy, and governance are the four essential pillars for realizing the demographic dividend, with health occupying a foundational position among them. Without a healthy population, even the most promising demographic structure cannot translate into real economic gains. Ensuring population health, therefore, is not only a matter of social justice but also an economic and developmental imperative. The creation of a healthy, skilled, and resilient population requires a new generation of professionals who can integrate demographic insight, health systems knowledge, policy analysis, and data-driven decision-making — precisely the kind of expertise the proposed Professional Master of Population Health aims to develop.
- 2.2 Population health as a field has evolved globally as a transformative framework for improving wellbeing through integrated attention to social, structural, environmental, and policy determinants. It moves beyond the traditional notion of health, focusing on how and why health outcomes are distributed across different population groups and how those distributions are shaped by systemic forces such as inequality, governance, and environmental change. Bangladesh's health landscape has undergone a significant transformation due to demographic transition, rapid urbanization, increasing life expectancy, and the growing dual burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases. The health of the population is now influenced not only by biological and behavioral factors but also by social gradients, migration, climate change, and urban living conditions. Meeting these interconnected challenges requires professionals with interdisciplinary training in population science, health systems, data analytics, and policy reform — competencies that are not yet adequately addressed within existing programs.

- 2.3 The program directly contributes to national goals articulated in Vision 2041, which emphasize digital transformation, health innovation, and human capital development. It also supports the Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Program (HPNSP) and the Eighth Five-Year Plan (2021–2025), both of which call for multisectoral strategies to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, the program aligns with SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). By integrating themes such as health systems, informatics, artificial intelligence, and leadership, it translates national development aspirations into academic and professional competencies. In this sense, the program does not merely respond to educational demand but strategically supports Bangladesh’s broader pursuit of demographic and health dividends through human resource development.
- 2.4 The curriculum of the Professional Masters of Population Health combines theoretical and applied learning through its comprehensive and specialized courses, as well as thesis research. Students will develop advanced skills in demography, epidemiology, research methods, health systems, policy analysis, behavioral communication, and informatics. The inclusion of emerging areas such as Population Health Informatics, Artificial Intelligence and Big Data, Health Systems and Policies, Social and Structural Determinants of Health, and Climate Change and Environmental Health ensure that graduates can navigate both traditional and digital dimensions of health systems. The thesis component reinforces independent inquiry, ethical research practice, and critical engagement with population-level data. Graduates will be prepared for leadership roles in government, research institutions, international agencies, NGOs, and development partners, including the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, DGHS, DGFP, BBS, BRAC, icddr,b, WHO, UNICEF, and the World Bank.
- 2.5 By integrating interdisciplinary learning, policy analysis, and data-driven practice, this program positions the University of Dhaka as a national and regional leader in population health education. It will generate a cadre of professionals capable of transforming data into decisions, research into policy, and evidence into equitable action. Ultimately, the introduction of the Professional Master of Population Health is both timely and necessary. It reflects a national commitment to harnessing Bangladesh’s demographic dividend by investing in its most powerful resource — a healthy, skilled, and informed population. By producing health professionals who are analytically rigorous, ethically grounded, and policy-oriented, the program will play a pivotal role in shaping a resilient, equitable, and sustainable future for Bangladesh.
- 2.6 While Bangladesh has well-established programs in public health, epidemiology, and demography, a distinct academic and professional gap remains in programs that integrate these disciplines within the broader conceptual and analytical framework of population health. Most current programs emphasize disease control or service delivery but lack a comprehensive approach that synthesizes social determinants, economic contexts, informatics, and system-level thinking. The proposed Professional Master of Population Health Program has been designed to fill this gap by integrating theory, research, policy, and practice producing graduates capable of addressing complex health challenges through evidence-informed, equity-focused, and interdisciplinary approaches. This 1.5-year, 48-credit program aligns with global

academic standards and benchmarks while maintaining a strong grounding in Bangladesh's health realities and development priorities.

3.0 Admission

3.1 Frequency of Admission

The program will have two intakes per year: January and July.

3.2 Eligibility for Admission

- 3.2.1 Admission is open to the candidates, either Bangladeshi or foreign nationals, who have at least a bachelor's degree, or its equivalent, from any recognized university/college, including dental/medical/nursing colleges, engineering universities/colleges, agricultural universities/colleges, etc. A Master's degree is compulsory for degree (Pass) applicants. A candidate who already has one master's degree is also eligible to apply. Candidates with Third Division/Class or CGPA below 2.50 at any level of their academic career are not eligible to apply. Persons from the health, population, and related fields with practical experience and currently in service are also encouraged to apply for admission.
- 3.2.2 Persons who have appeared in the bachelor's degree final examination, or its equivalent degrees, may also apply, but they shall have to submit their certificates or marks sheets within 03 (three) days after the written admission test is held; otherwise, their candidatures shall be cancelled.

3.3 Application Procedure

The application form, along with the prospectus and information leaflet, will be available in the Department of Population Sciences or on the Department's website upon payment of the fees determined by the Department. The filled-in application form should be submitted online through the website within the date notified in the advertisement.

3.4 Selection of Students

Forty (40) students will be admitted into the Professional Master of Population Health Program. The students will be selected based on a competitive admission test. The admission test will be designed to evaluate an aspirant candidate's analytical ability, quantitative aptitudes, critical reasoning, and linguistic competencies. The Department of Population Sciences will notify students about the date and venue of the admission test to be held at the University of Dhaka. The admission test comprises 100 marks, of which 70 will be for the Written Examination and 30 for the Oral test. The admission test will focus on the following three parts:

Quantitative Aptitude: The quantitative part will be designed to assess candidates' aptitudes in arithmetic, algebra, and geometry through mathematical comparisons, problems, and other exercises. The Quantitative Aptitude will be measured through MCQ questions, which will most likely include the following:

- Arithmetic: Percentages, proportions, ratios, fractions, interest, and simplifications.
- Algebra: Factors, series, functions, linear equations, graphs, etc.

- Geometry: Coordinates geometry, loci, straight lines, angles, triangles, parallelograms, rectangles, squares, spheres, circles, areas, volumes, perimeters, planes, etc.

English Language (MCQ): The English Language section of the MCQ will assess candidates' command of vocabulary, grammar, syntax, sentence structure, and reading comprehension. Questions will test the ability to identify errors, select appropriate words or phrases, interpret short passages, and demonstrate understanding of meaning, tone, and context.

English Writing Assessment: To evaluate candidates' writing proficiency in English, a compulsory writing task will be administered. Candidates will be required to write **two short paragraphs** on given topics within a limited time and space. This component will aim to assess the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently, use appropriate vocabulary and grammar, organize sentences logically, and demonstrate awareness of contemporary issues.

Critical Reasoning and Analytical Ability: This part will consist of two sections. The first part will assess the candidate's general knowledge, and the second part will focus on their analytical ability, logical reasoning, and ability to synthesize information to arrive at logical conclusions.

The marks distribution of the admission test/qualifying examination will be as follows:

Topics	Marks
Quantitative Aptitude (MCQ)	20
English Language (MCQ)	20
English Writing Assessment	10
Critical Reasoning and Analytical Ability (MCQ)	20
Subtotal	(70)
Oral test	30
Grand Total	100

The duration of the written test will be sixty (60) minutes. The oral test will be held on the same day as the written test.

3.5 Final Selection and Registration

The final selection of candidates will be based on their combined performance in the written examination and the oral test. Applicants who are offered admission to the Professional Master of Population Health program must collect the prescribed admission form from the office of the Department of Population Sciences and submit the duly completed form within the specified deadline, along with three (3) passport-size and two (2) stamp-size photographs, as well as other required documents. After completing these formalities, candidates are required to pay the prescribed fees as decided by the Department and approved by the DU authority. Admission to the Professional Master of Population Health program will be confirmed only upon successful completion of all admission procedures, including full payment of the required fees to the Department office.

4.0 Curriculum/Structure of the Professional Master of Population Health Program

- 4.1 The Professional Master of Population Health Program shall be of 48 credits and divided into 3 semesters. Each semester will be 22 weeks long, consisting of 15 weeks for class teaching, 3 weeks for mid-term examination, 1 week for semester final examination preparation, and 3 weeks for holding the semester final examinations.
- 4.2 Each full unit course shall be of 100 marks.
- 4.3 The program shall include teaching of 16 course units for a total of 1600 marks, which shall be translated into 48 credit hours.
- 4.4 The total credit hours shall be evaluated based on 1600 total marks, of which 1500 marks shall be for 15 full units taught courses, or 1300 marks for 13 full unit taught courses, and 200 marks for thesis research and 100 marks for written and oral comprehensive examinations.
- 4.5 There will be five (5) taught courses in the first and second semester, with 100 marks each, resulting in 15 earned credits, and five (5) taught courses (or three (3) taught courses and a thesis equivalent to two (2) courses) and one (1) course as written and oral comprehensive examinations in the third semester.
- 4.6 Number of lecture classes/contact hours per week shall be determined based on the credit hours assigned to each course. For a three (3) credit course unit, there shall be two-hour classes every week.
- 4.7 The distribution of course units, marks, and credit build-up for the Professional Master of Population Health Program for 1600 marks for 16 courses shall be as follows:

Course Structure of the Professional Master of Population Health Program

Semester	No. of Courses	Total Marks	Earned Credits
One	5	500	15
Two	5	500	15
Three	5	500	15
	Comprehensive (Written & Oral)	100 (50+50)	3
	OR		
	3	300	9
	Thesis	200	6
	Comprehensive (Written & Oral)	100 (50+50)	3
Total	16	1600	48

4.8 Semester-wise Course Distribution of the Master of Population Health Program

The following table shows the semester-wise distribution of core and elective courses of the Professional Master of Population Health Program:

Semester-wise Core and Elective Course Distribution

Semester I: 500 Marks, 15 Credits				
Course Number	Course Title	Course Status	Total Marks	Earned Credits
POP 601	Foundations of Population Health	Core	100	3
POP 602	Social Determinants of Health	Core	100	3
POP 603	Quantitative Research Methods in Population Health	Core	100	3
POP 604	Statistics for Population Health	Core	100	3
POP 605	Epidemiology in Population Health	Core	100	3
Semester II: 500 Marks, 15 Credits				
POP 606	Demography and Population Dynamics	Core	100	3
POP 607	Qualitative & Mixed Methods Research in Population Health	Core	100	3
POP 608	Global Population Health	Core	100	3
POP 609	Health Systems, Policies, and Programs in Population Health	Core	100	3
POP 610	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	Elective	100	3
POP 611	Population Aging & Intergenerational Health	Elective	100	3
POP 612	Infectious Disease Dynamics & Pandemic Preparedness	Elective	100	3
POP 613	Climate Change & Environmental Health	Elective	100	3
POP 614	Mental Health & Wellbeing for the Population	Elective	100	3
POP 615	Nutrition and Population Health	Elective	100	3
Semester III: 600 Marks, 18 Credits				
POP 616	Project Management for Population Health	Core	100	3
POP 617	Human Resource Management for Population Health	Core	100	3
POP 618	Non-communicable Diseases in Populations	Elective	100	3
POP 619	Migration, Urbanization, & Health	Elective	100	3
POP 620	Gender and Population Health	Elective	100	3
POP 621	Planetary Health	Elective	100	3
POP 622	Urban Health	Elective	100	3
POP 623	Social and Behavior Change Communication for Population Health	Elective	100	3
POP 624	Health Economics & Healthcare Financing	Elective	100	3
POP 625	Population Health Informatics, Artificial Intelligence & Big Data	Elective	100	3
POP 626	Professional Development & Leadership in Population Health*	Elective	100	3
POP 627	Thesis**	Elective	200	6
POP 628	Comprehensive (Written & Oral)	Core	100	3

*This will be a core course for non-thesis students.

Students must have obtained a **minimum CGPA of 3.25 (out of 4.00) at the first semester final examination.

4.9 A total of 200 marks for the thesis is distributed as 150 marks for the written Thesis Evaluation and 50 marks for the Viva on Thesis.

4.10 Classes for the Professional Master of Population Health Program shall be held on Friday (3:00 PM to 7:15 PM) and Saturday (9:00 AM to 4:00 PM).

5.0 Administration of the Examination

- 5.1 The Chairman of the Department shall provide the Dean of the Faculty and the students with a semester calendar before the beginning of a semester, indicating the duration of 15 weeks for class teaching, dates of mid-semester examination, date of submission of assignment/term paper, duration of the preparation week, dates for the semester final examinations, and date for the commencement of the next semester.
- 5.2 At the beginning of the semester, a course teacher shall provide the students with a course outline indicating the objectives, contents, and activities (teaching approaches such as labs, case studies, field work, lecture, presentation, etc.) related to the course, textbooks to be followed, the dates for mid-semester and submission of term papers/home assignments.
- 5.3 The course teacher shall announce the result of the mid-semester examination and term papers/home assignments within two weeks of the date of holding the examination and submit the marks to the Chairman of the Examination Committee immediately after the announcement of the result.
- 5.4 All semester final examinations shall be conducted by the Department, with the assistance of the Office of the Controller of the Examinations, except for the semester final examination of the third semester of the Master of Population Health Program.
- 5.5 All students of the semester concerned shall have to fill in the final examination entry form, supplied by the department, on payment of dues determined by the Department/Controller of Examinations, for appearing at the semester final examination, except for the semester final examination of the third semester of the Master of Population Health Program.
- 5.6 The Controller of the Examinations shall conduct only the final semester examination of the third semester of the Master of Population Health Program.
- 5.7 All students shall have to fill in the examination entry form, supplied by the Controller of Examinations, on payment of dues, for appearing at the semester final examination of the third semester of the Master of Population Health Program.
- 5.8 The Controller of the Examinations shall publish the cumulative results of the Master of Population Health Program and shall provide the transcript showing course-wise grades and the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of the candidates for the degree concerned.

6.0 Evaluation and Grading

- 6.1 Evaluation and grading shall be determined based on an overall evaluation of the student's active class performance, term paper/case presentation/quiz, mid-semester examination, and semester final examination.

6.2 The distribution of marks for evaluation shall be as follows:

Class participation	5 %
Class test	10%
Term paper/case presentation/quiz	15 %
Mid-semester examination	20 %
Semester final examination	50 %
Total	100 %

6.3 For each course, students' active class performance, term paper/case presentation/quiz, mid-semester examination, and semester final examination shall be evaluated and totaled as per the rules of the university and converted into letter grades following a 4-point grading scale presented below:

Grading Structure for the Master of Population Health Program in a 4-Point Grading Scale

Mark Range (in percent)	Letter-Grade	Explanation	Grade Point
80 and Above	A+	Excellent	4.00
75-79	A		3.75
70-74	A-		3.50
65-69	B+	Very Good	3.25
60-64	B		3.00
55-59	B-		2.75
50-54	C+	Satisfactory	2.50
45-49	C		2.25
40-44	D	Passing	2.00
Below 40	F	Failing	0.00
.....	I	Incomplete
.....	W	 Withdrawn

6.4 Interpretation of the Grades

- 'A+', 'A', and 'A-' grades are indicative of 'excellent' performance overall by a student, earning grade points of 4.0, 3.75, and 3.50, respectively.
- 'B+', 'B', and 'B-' grades are indicative of 'very good' performance overall by a student, earning grade points of 3.25, 3.00, and 2.75, respectively.
- 'C+' and 'C' grades are indicative of 'satisfactory' performance overall by a student, earning grade points of 2.50 and 2.25, respectively.
- 'D' grade is indicative of minimally acceptable 'passing' performance overall by a student, earning a grade point of 2.00.
- 'F' grade is indicative of an unacceptable 'failing' performance overall by a student, i.e., failure to earn any credit points.
- 'I' grade is indicative of a situation where a student, for non-academic reasons beyond her/his control, is unable to complete the full requirements of the course due to not being able to sit for the semester final examination. With the submission of valid and authenticated evidence of such reason(s), and the recommendation of the course teacher (to be reported to the Chairman of the Examination Committee), that particular student shall be allowed to complete the semester

final examination with the next batch. Meanwhile, the student concerned will be promoted to the next semester. If an 'Incomplete' grade is not cleared with the next batch, the 'I' grade shall automatically be changed to an 'F' grade. A maximum of two 'I' grades shall be allowed to a student in one semester. However, to get an 'Incomplete' grade, a student must apply to the Chairman of the Department at least before the examination is held.

- 'W' grade shall be awarded when a student is permitted to withdraw/drop a course/semester without penalty. Withdrawals without penalty are not permitted after the mid-semester examination. A student may take readmission in the semester concerned with the next batch by paying the fees for two semesters.

7.0 Promotion and Improvement

- 7.1 A student must earn a minimum CGPA of 2.00 to be promoted from the first to the second semester.
- 7.2 For promotion from the second to the third semester, a student shall be required to earn a minimum CGPA of 2.25
- 7.3 To obtain a Master of Population Health degree, a student must earn a minimum CGPA of 2.25, considering all the grade points earned in a total number of courses, including improved grades, if any.
- 7.4 A student earning 'F' grade in any course shall be allowed to improve the grade with the next batch. In such a case, the student shall be allowed to improve their grades in the semester final examination twice, including once in the mid-semester examination.
- 7.5 If a student obtains a grade 'B' or less in a course, she/he shall be allowed to improve the grade through an improvement examination with the following batch.
- 7.6 Such improvement shall be allowed only once in a course, and in such a case, the student's previous final grade shall be automatically cancelled.
- 7.7 If a student obtains 'B+' or better grade in any course, she/he shall not be allowed to repeat the course for grade improvement.
- 7.8 If a student likes to improve the grade point earned in a course in the third semester for the Master of Population Health program, they must apply for such an improvement examination before the certificate is issued.
- 7.9 Improvement shall not be allowed once the certificate is issued.
- 7.10 A student carrying a grade 'F' in any course shall not be awarded the degree unless she/he improves it by appearing at the semester final examination with the next batch.
- 7.11 If the student gets an 'F' in the improvement examination, he/she shall automatically be dropped from the semester, and the student shall have to take readmission with the next batch, provided the student concerned is eligible for readmission.
- 7.12 For improvement of grade in a course, the student shall apply to the Chairman of the Department at least 4 (four) weeks before the start of the semester final examination.

8.0 Readmission and Drop Out

- 8.1 A student failing to get the required grade points for promotion (clause 8.2) from one year to the next may seek readmission with the following batch.
- 8.2 For readmission, a student shall have to apply within one month after the announcement of the result of the year concerned.
- 8.3 On readmission, grades earned earlier by a student in the class of readmission shall cease to exist, and the student has to retake all the coursework and examinations.

- 8.4 A student shall not be allowed readmission more than twice during the entire program.
- 8.5 A student failing to earn the CGPA for promotion from one year to the next after taking readmission within the stipulated time shall be dropped out of the program.
- 8.6 A student earning an 'F' grade in any course after taking improvement examinations or readmission within the stipulated time shall be dropped from the program.

9.0 Adoption of Unfair Means

- 9.1 If any student adopts unfair means in any examination or home assignment, the teacher/invigilator shall report in writing to the Chairman of the Examination Committee/Chief Invigilator for onward transmission to the Disciplinary Board of the University for action as per university rules.

10.0 Completion of the Professional Master of Population Health Program

- 10.1 A student shall be allowed to complete the Professional Master of Population Health Program within five years from the date of admission into the program with prior permission from the Department. However, this will not apply to students who have dropped out due to the clauses outlined in sections 9.5 and 9.6.

11.0 General Facilities

The Department of Population Sciences, with active support from UNFPA, has established adequate support facilities for the program, including sophisticated electronic devices and equipment.

11.1 Specialized Library

The Department has established a specialized library containing a rich collection of books, periodicals, and visual materials on population-related topics. More than 5500 excellent entries have already been collected. Recently, the library automation was completed, and students now have access to E-library facilities. The air-conditioned library has a capacity for 50 readers at a time. A Library and Database Networking Officer is always there to assist.

11.2 Computer Laboratory

The department has a well-equipped computer laboratory featuring 40 computers, a multimedia projector, and a sound system. The students and faculty of the department enjoy fiber optics broadband internet facilities with an independent domain. A Computer Lab Demonstrator is always there to assist.

11.3 Student Counseling Service

Close contact between students and faculty is an integral part of the program. Students are assigned a departmental student advisor who works with them on various aspects of the academic program and their lives.