THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
School of Social and Political Science  

PROGRAMME PRE-PROPOSAL FOR  
e-MSc in Global Challenges  

1. Academic Strategy  

1.1 Relevance of the programme  
The e-MSc in Global Challenges is an innovative, interdisciplinary programme that will be delivered through online distance learning. The programme is modular; allowing students to acquire the necessary credits over an extended period of time, and will be built around the delivery and coordination of three discrete, 60-credit e-certificates in Environment, Health and Development (see appendix 1). These certificates will be conceptually linked through three core courses in ‘Global Challenges’ (see appendix 2), which have been developed and tailored in relation to the other programmes. Each will introduce key themes and tools, and at strategic points within the course will draw on common case study material that gives insight to all three issues (for example, in week 3 a specific city will be chosen to study as a case study which will give the opportunity for students to interact across all three programmes).  

We believe our strong expert base, the international reputation of the University of Edinburgh, our institutional experience in running similar courses, the excellent research and training environment provided by the Graduate School and the obvious healthy demand for multidisciplinary training to engage and deal with complex, emerging global issues provides an ideal basis from which to develop this programme, and on which to confidently predict recruitment.  

1.2 Degree Progression  
The typical progression through the programme would be as follows: if students elect to complete only one of the e-certificates, generally on a part-time basis, they would, upon completion, receive a PG Certificate in that particular programme. If students elected to complete a second certificate, they would receive a PG Diploma in Global Challenges. If students elected to go on to complete all three certificates they would receive an MSc in Global Challenges. The latter option would necessitate a different, more substantial assessment method to ensure that all requirements of a masters programme are met, in lieu of a traditional dissertation component (we envisage a lengthier assessment that would span two courses in the ‘final’ e-certificate but will expand upon that once we proceed the proposal of the full MSc programme). The quality assurance and management of the diploma and masters options will fall to SSPS. Students could complete two or more certificates over several years as they can effectively store and bank credits gained for up to five years. This will create a flexible, responsive system of programme delivery tailored to people already in employment who seek to re-skill.  

At this stage we are not considering a dissertation (or a linked internship) as an option for the final 60 credits as we want to ensure we have the full complement of 180 credit courses developed first. This will necessitate further thought and discussion before submission of the
full proposal for the e-MSc in Global Challenges. As it will take three years to progress through the complete programme we may change this as student demand dictates.

1.3 Interdisciplinary strengths
The e-MSc in Global Challenges is interdisciplinary in nature and taking advantage of the established multi-disciplinary research and teaching strengths from across the University of Edinburgh. This will play to a particular strength of the university: its comprehensive international outlook and engagement. There are of course logistical and institutional issues in proposing and pursuing such an integrated approach but we hope that the system of effectively devolving e-certificates to schools whilst centralising the organisation and awarding of diplomas and masters programmes through one school will negate some of these issues.

1.4 New/Recent Courses
The programme will draw on some existing e-learning courses that are well under development and the conversion of some existing face-to-face courses. Additionally, there will be the need to develop new standalone courses, particularly the three courses, one for each certificate, that we deem as ‘core’ courses.

We will seek to develop a common look and feel to these courses to ensure continuity across the programme, while also capturing the diversity of expertise from across the university.

1.5 Entry requirements
Students admitted to the programme are required to have an Upper Second Class degree or equivalent. We will design the programme in such a way that it will be accessible to people from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds, social science, science and medicine.

1.6 Quality Assurance
This MSc and Diploma programme will be managed by the Graduate School of Social and Political Science and will be strategically reviewed in accordance with the standard procedures of the School. The constituent e-certificates will be managed by the hosting school: e-cert Environment in Geosciences, e-cert Health in Biomedical Sciences, and e-cert Development in SPS.

We are currently recruiting an open-ended lecturer who will act as programme director for the MSc and Diploma in Global Challenges and the e-certificate in Development. The partner schools have committed to appointing someone to act as the director of the other two e-certificates.

Quality will also be assured by a management group representing all three Colleges, Professor Sue Welburn of CMVM, Professor Mark Rounsevell of CSE and Professor James Smith of CHSS. Additional specialist support will be provided by Professor David Dewhurst, Dr Kate Orton-Johnson and Mr Keith Brown. This group will be supplemented by the dedicated lecturer and e-learning development specialist (TBA). Mr Jake Broadhurst will provide administrative and organisational support to the management group.
2. Resources Issues

2.1 Market Survey
Market analysis suggests that there is a strong demand for advanced, multidisciplinary training in fields pertinent to environment and society, international development and global health. There is currently an established market of related distance learning programmes offered by other institutions with approximately twenty competitors operating in the USA, Canada, Australia and the UK. Key UK competitors are Imperial College, UCL and the School of Oriental and African Studies. SOAS has 900 part-time e-learning students on its books at any one time, the Open University international development programmes generally run with c. 100s students each, Manchester, Birmingham and more recently, the London International Development Centre LIDC (a consortium of London-based universities) also attract significant and increasing numbers across a range of courses. We estimate that around 3-4000 students enrol in international development-related MSc-level e-programmes in the UK each year. In addition, these universities deliver several hundred short courses each year, which represents another potential market. In the US, Columbia University has led the development of a blended approach to delivering international development teaching and is in the process of establishing an international network of likeminded institutions – of which Edinburgh is a member: http://globalmdp.org/network/affiliates

There is a growing market for aspiring professionals and experienced practitioners to train or re-train in flexible ways that do not require them to interrupt their careers, or current responsibilities.

We believe that the University of Edinburgh can effectively compete in this market. None of the institutions mentioned above has the same breadth of world-leading expertise across our three Colleges. Edinburgh can draw together unrivalled academic expertise in medicine, veterinary medicine, the natural sciences, environmental science and engineering, and the social sciences to develop and deliver an exciting package of training designed to develop the analytical skills and knowledge bases of tomorrow’s global leaders. This, combined with Edinburgh’s strong international brand, can allow us to carve out a unique niche in the growing market of distance learning provision.

2.2 Student numbers
We envisage growing the suite of programmes to a level where they recruit around 100 students across all three (or five) programmes per annum. This number is realistic based on recruitments figures elsewhere and in the University of Edinburgh, and would reflect similar numbers to the corresponding face-to-face MSc programmes (MSc Africa and International Development, and MSc Environment and Development).

2.3 Scholarships
The programme will generally recruit fee-paying students and external scholarships funding will be used to open the opportunity to individuals from developing nations. Success in gaining scholarship funding from the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission (15 full scholarships in 4 out of the last 5 years) demonstrates that the team have a strong track record in developing programmes that fits with donor interests. The 2011 round of CSC Scholars has been awarded specifically to create a multi-disciplinary cohort across 4 internationally focused programmes in the Global Health Academy – strongly endorsing the aspiration to bring people together around global challenges.
2.4 Resource Information

(i) Tuition fees: The programme has a flat fee of £9,650 for the full MSc pegged to the University Fee Spine (pro-rata for 60-credit certificates, and 120-credit diplomas). This draws on practice from many CMVM distance learning programmes and is close to fees charged by key competitors Imperial College and University College London. We believe this is a realistic fee point given the comparable reputation of the University of Edinburgh and our ability to deliver a unique, high-quality and immersive suite of programmes.

Fee income allocation will follow course provision using the standard NPRAS model. A small proportion of the fee income will be allocated by the participating Schools to cover programme level costs including marketing, administration, etc. at a rate that will be negotiated between the participating schools prior to the launch of the programme.

Fees will be invoiced at a course level as per the MSc in eLearning in the School of Education. There will be options to pay per course or pay per award (enabling students to avoid incremental fee increase and more straightforward for sponsors and employers). The fees in the expenditure spreadsheet (Form B) are based on up-front payment of annual fees therefore payment on a course level will result in limited variation from these figures.

(ii) Staff resources: The programme will require initial investment in staff to develop and deliver core courses. The award of a Distance Education Initiative grant will support the development and delivery of the e-certificates and the programme as a whole. Additionally, we have resources to appoint a dedicated e-learning developer for an initial period of two years and make a significant contribution to the cost of a dedicated administrator for the SPS Graduate School Office.
Appendix 1

i. Schematic of MSc/Diploma/Certificate Structure

ii. Schematic of E-Cert. Global Development Structure
## Appendix 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Global Health Challenges</th>
<th>Global Development Challenges</th>
<th>Global Environmental Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Overview of issues, concepts, principles, theory, methods</td>
<td>Overview of issues, concepts, principles, theory, methods</td>
<td>Overview of issues, concepts, principles, theory, methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Global burden of disease</td>
<td>Inequality and poverty</td>
<td>Climate and Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3#</td>
<td>Non-comm diseases</td>
<td>Cities</td>
<td>Urbanisation (planning policy, gentrification, waste management, …)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gender, maternal and child health</td>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>Population/demography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Injury prevention and violence</td>
<td>Conflict, Beliefs and Risk</td>
<td>Pollution and degradation (nitrogen, chemicals, air quality, desertification, mining, …)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>7#</td>
<td>Humanitarian emergencies</td>
<td>Societal vulnerability</td>
<td>Extreme events (tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanoes, weather)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8#</td>
<td>Infectious diseases</td>
<td>Globalisation</td>
<td>Water security</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Human rights</td>
<td>Food production</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Health systems</td>
<td>Governance Systems</td>
<td>Ecosystems and biodiversity</td>
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