**I MODULE INTRODUCTION**

# Letter of welcome

Dear colleagues

Welcome to this second semester *Public Health Research* Module. I will have met some of you and had contact with all of you through having co-convened and taught on the Population and Development II module with Nikki Schaay in your first semester. It is good to reconnect with you all again.

This module was designed to meet the need for an applied course in the design of focused research, which could address the questions, which arise within the broad field of Public Health practice and research. It is also the first steps in your being able to begin the path to preparing a research proposal in year two of your MPH studies and then conducting your research and writing up your MPH mini-thesis.

It is hoped that by the end of the module, you may have identified a topic of interest, begun to explore literature related to it, and explored your research options with regard to qualitative and quantitative research problems. You should be ready to take the first steps in: reviewing literature on a research topic; formulating a research problem and study rationale; developing an aim and objectives; identifying a research design; and considering research ethics issues. In the research methods modules offered next year you will either choose the *Qualitative or Quantitative Research Methods module*. You will then start developing this proposal further, by paying attention to the specific research methods, techniques in data collection, sampling and analysis. *So don’t stress that this is all the preparation you will have – it is the first step.* If you don’t have a research topic by the end of this module that you are sure about, there is still time to think and discuss this while you are doing your second year modules in *Qualitative* or *Quantitative Research Methods* and your elective modules.

The module consists of Four Units, containing study sessions, which will provide an overview of the research process and take you through the process of beginning to develop a research proposal. You will be referred back to parts of the module you did on *Measuring Health and Disease II* (MHDII) on quantitative research. There will be a greater concentration on qualitative and mixed methods research in this module because you have already received some grounding in quantitative research through MHDII.

The introductory pages below provide you with an overview of the

Module, its outcomes, as well as the sources that will support and assist you. Take the time to look through this section before you begin studying. Your assignment questions appear below and are also are uploaded separately

under as Assignment questions under Assignments on the Ikamva site for this module. It is important to answer the sub-questions asked of you. These assignments will specifically focus on building your research capacity.

The module is accompanied by readings (core and optional extra) that have been loaded under Course resources on the iKamva site. These and other texts are designed for self-­­study. This enables you to work through the material at your own pace. Flexible learning allows you to explore the material in whatever depth you prefer, and to skip over parts with which you are already familiar. The module involves a variety of different kinds of learning activities, including reading, reflection and application.

The *SOPH Programme Handbook* provides you with contact information on administrative issues and module choices for the MPH. It also contains the general information you need for your assignment tasks and how they will be assessed. We have uploaded some tips on reading, writing and assignment writing under a sub-folder under Course resource. Please contact me, as the module convenor, for questions you may have related to the academic content of the module.

Remember also to consult the SOPH Academic Handbook that is uploaded onto iKamva for all MPH students. This provides additional information and guidelines for submitting assignments, referencing and on avoiding plagiarism in assignments etc. In addition, we have uploaded a very useful UCT guide on the Harvard referencing style onto iKamva under Course Resources.

We hope that you will give us some feedback on your experience of this module, so that we can improve the module for future students. You will be asked to do so on an evaluation form, which will be sent to you during Winter School for those that attend and at the end, on completion of the module. We hope that you enjoy the module and find it useful in your own efforts to improve Public and community health.

Best wishes

Prof Di Cooper, Module Convener

**Prof Diane Cooper**



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# Information about this module

## Module Aims and Rationale

The module is designed to advance your skills, knowledge and capacity:

To understand the nature and scope of Public Health and identify problems in Public Health practice that can be investigated with research.

To explore the research process by engaging with the following tasks:

* + - Review the scope of Public Health;
    - Demonstrate a critical understanding of research approaches in Public Health Research
    - Demonstrate a basic understanding of Public Health Research designs
    - Engage in a preliminary manner with quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods in research
    - Undertake a preliminary review of the literature for a selected topic

and a critical review of selected articles

* + - Choose an appropriate study design based on consideration of the type of data that you may wish to collect and the target study

population

* + - Identify and develop a Public Health Research problem
    - Formulate a research aim, objectives and purpose in researching a selected research problem
    - Consider research ethics principles with respect to a selected research problem

## Module Outline

This Module aims to provide a broad overview of Public Health Research in preparation for undertaking a research study. Your future mini-thesis will be developed next year during the module, which follows this one, *Qualitative* or *Quantitative Research Methods*. At this stage, however, it may be helpful to study the structure and requirements of a research proposal, which are shown below. The *Qualitative* and *Quantitative* Research modules will guide you through these processes in greater detail to enable you to prepare a research proposal or protocol next year.

## Stages in Developing a Research Proposal

The development of a research protocol is often a cyclical rather than a linear process. The arrows in the diagram below indicate this ongoing interaction between all stages in this process.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **QUESTIONS TO ASK** | **STAGE** | **ELEMENT** |
| *What is the problem? Why should we study it?*  *What is the context of the problem?* | **1. Statement of the Research Problem** | * Identify the problem * Explain rationale for studying the problem * Analyse the problem * Describe the research setting * Use this to write an introduction to the study |
| *What information is already available?* | **2. Literature Review** | * Review the literature and other available information * Develop Reference List |
| *Why do we want to carry out the research?*  *What do we hope to achieve?* | **3. Formulation of Study Aims and Objectives** | * Set aims and objectives |
| *What additional data do we need to reach our research objectives?*  *How are we going to collect this information?* | **4. Research Methodology** | * Study approach, design and types * Data collection methods * Data collection tools   + Record reviews   + Survey type interviews with questionnaires   + Observations   + In depth qualitative Interviews   + Focus group discussions * Plan for data collection * Plan for data processing and analysis |
| *Who will do what and when?* | **5. Work Plan** | * Personnel * Timetable |
| *What steps will we take to address ethical considerations?* | **6. Ethical Statement** | * Ethics Clearance Application * Participant Information Sheet and Consent form |
| *How will we present our proposal to relevant authorities and/or funders?* | **7. Proposal Summary** |  |

## Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this module, you should be better able to:**

* + 1. Discuss a range of key research approaches in Public Health.
    2. Identify a Public Health problem.
    3. Develop appropriate research problems and questions.
    4. Undertake a critical literature review on a selected study topic.
    5. Explore the application of the qualitative and quantitative approaches to the research problem.
    6. Apply different research designs and discuss their respective potential.
    7. Apply knowledge of basic research ethics principles

These outcomes are addressed through the study sessions and assessed in the two assignments.

At the same time, the module provides opportunities to improve a number of your academic learning skills which are integrated into the sessions.

## Readings

Module core readings are uploaded under Course Resources. In addition, there are overall core readings in a book that you should have acquired: Robson, C. (2011). *Real World Research*. UK: John Wiley and Sons. You are also expected to pursue additional relevant current literature and additional resource material for your assignment tasks. The UWC Faculty Librarian can help you locate relevant materials. If you have not already done so, during your first semester, please contact the SOPH Student Administrator to arrange a letter of permission to access other University libraries. Also see your *SOPH Programme Handbook* for further guidance.

## Module Evaluation

You will be asked by your lecturer to evaluate this module once you have completed it. Please let us know how you find it as this will help us to improve the module for future students.

# Assessment

There is further information about assessment in the *SOPH Programme Handbook*. Please refer to it before submitting your assignment.

## Information about Assessment

Self-assessment is built into the module in the form of Tasks, allowing you to check your progress and to study actively. You should try to do the tasks, as this is the best way to learn.

Bear in mind that research is a process, and you need time to consider your ideas, to turn them over in your mind and to discuss them with others. It would be useful at this stage to buy a hard covered notebook to use as a research journal. This has the advantage of keeping your work towards developing a mini- thesis proposal in one place, to gather the tasks you do as you work through the study sessions, and to keep track of problems or questions as you encounter them. This will enable you to be better prepared when you take either the *Quantitative* or *Qualitative* Research Module next year and when it comes to developing your research protocol.

Two compulsory assignments are required to complete the module. Dr Ernesta Kuneke, who some of you will meet during the PHR module week’s block, will be assisting in marking your assignments.

It is important for you to take note that:

* + - The first assignment contributes 40% towards your final mark; and
    - The second assignment contributes 60% towards your final mark for the module.

Please note:

* + - You are required to pass both assignments with a minimum of 50%.
    - You must have a minimum aggregate of 50% to pass the module.
    - If you get below 50% in Assignment 1, you may repeat it once only, but you may only be awarded a 50% pass mark, no higher.
    - If you do not pass it second time around, you cannot proceed to Assignment 2 and must repeat the module the following year.
    - If you do not achieve 50% in Assignment 2, you must repeat the entire module the following year.

## Submitting Assignments

Please read the guidelines for Submission of Assignments in section 8 of the *SOPH Programme Handbook*. **NOTE: From this year (as was the case in your first semester), your assignments (drafts and final) need to be uploaded under Assignments on the Module iKamva site and not sent by email to the address specified in the *SOPH Programme Handbook.***

When sending in your assignments, follow these important guidelines:

* + - *Assignments must be typed in 1.5 line-spacing using 12pt Times New Roman*, *with page layout set to A4.*
* *Always number the pages.*
* *As was the case in semester 1, when submitting your assignments these need to be uploaded as an attached MSword file in the appropriate place on*

*the PHR iKamva site. Your assignment file must include a fully completed Assignment Cover Sheet as the first page of your assignment file, and should not be a separate file. The assignment cover sheet will be uploaded under*

*the Assignment subfolder under Course Resources as a Msword file. You must label the your assignment files as follows:*

* + Your name (Surname, initial), e.g. Mambwe R
  + Module abbreviation (see below for Core modules), e.g. **PHR**
  + Assignment number, e.g. 1 or 2 and Draft or Final
  + The year, i.e. 2018
  + *e.g. Mambwe R\_PHR Asn 1 Final 2018;*

*Mambwe R\_PHR Asn 1 Draft 2018.*

* Please keep a copy of your assignment.

**Please take note!!!**

Assignment deadlines will be sent to you by the Student Administrator and will be uploaded onto the MPH 2018 site.

## If you have any queries that remain after semester 1 about how to access resources for modules, including the PHR module on iKamva or about uploading assignments please contact Ms Ziyanda Mwanda our SOPH computer expert for assistance: [amwanda@uwc.ac.za](mailto:amwanda@uwc.ac.za)

* 1. **Draft Assignments: Please read this section carefully**

As you are studying at a distance, lecturers will provide feedback on Draft Assignments. However, Drafts will ONLY be reviewed if they are received at least TWO weeks before the final submission date. If they are received less than two weeks before the submission date/deadline, they will not be accepted as drafts. Allow a week to 10 days for your lecturer to return your work.

Take note that Drafts are also expected to be drafts, i.e. work in progress. Use opportunities like these to check your understanding of the assignment requirements, to try out difficult parts of the assignment, and to ask questions.

## Assignment Deadlines and Extensions

Assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the Assignment Deadlines schedule circulated to you by the Mrs Corinne Carolissen, the MPH Student Administrator. Extensions may be granted only under special circumstances. If you do need to request an extension, contact the Mrs Carolissen as soon as a problem arises (not the lecturer or Module Convenor). No extensions will be given for Draft Assignments, and no late submission of assignments will be accepted in Semester 2, as these assignments and marks will need to be sent to an external examiner for moderation and then to the central administration to load up your progression in time for your next year’s studies**.** Mrs Carolissen’s contact details are: email: [ccarolissen@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ccarolissen@uwc.ac.za); Tel: +27 21 9592166.

Please try to manage your time effectively. You’ll find some guidance on doing so in the SOPH *Academic Handbook.*

* 1. **Assignments for *Public Health Research***

There are two assignments for this module. The module has been structured so that you complete the first assignment at the end of Unit 2 and the second assignment after Units 3 and 4 (i.e. when you have completed the whole PHR module). The assignments are include in this document below and have also been uploaded as MSword files under Assignments on our iKamva site.

# Assignment 1: Research approaches, study methods and limitations

### (40% of module mark)

Read the scenarios below and then follow through by answering the assignment questions for Assignment 1. Make sure to read carefully through the assignment questions, guidelines and the assessment criteria for the assignment.

### You should have worked through Unit 1 and 2 of the PHR module guide, with its associated readings before attempting Assignment 1.

**Scenario 1**

**Antiretroviral Treatment adherence experiences of a teenager living with HIV**

Pamela Is a 15-year old teenage girl who is living with HIV and is on Antretroviral Treatment (ART). She is interviewed as part of a study on the experiences with ART adherence of youth living with HIV. In the interview she explains that she lives in a small town in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa with her Aunt and her three cousins. She is currently in Grade 8 at one of the local high schools. She knew that she had got HIV through her mother as her mother had told her this when she was about 10 years old. She had lived with her mother, her 3 younger sisters and her grandmother in a rural village 50 km away until her mother died when she was 12 years old. That is when she went to live with her aunt. She spoke about her difficulties in always adhering to her ARV treatment. She said that only her aunt knew of her HIV status and that she did not feel she could tell anyone else. Although she knew that she needed to take her ARV treatment every day, this was sometimes difficult. She did not want her cousins to know that she had HIV and so had to hide her tablets and take them when they were not around. She also felt angry that she was having to take tablets every day and so sometimes didn’t take them but rather threw them away. On other occasions when she was out with friends in the evenings, she found it hard to take her medication at the time she was supposed to as she did not want them to ask her why she was taking medication. As a result she was only able to do so when she got home and could find a private space to do this. She had to miss some of her classes at school once a month to go and collect her ARV medication at the clinic. Sometimes the clinic had a shortage of the ARV treatment she needed and so she had to back again. This caused her problems in having to miss some classes once gain in order to collect her treatment. It also meant that on these occasions she went for a few days without having her treatment. She also

spoke of problems when she went back to visit her sisters and grandmother in the rural village during school holidays. She sometimes stayed there longer than she expected due to family problems. She then found that she did not have enough medication to last her until she returned to her aunt’s house. At the time of the interview she as feeling worried that she was not always able to be completely adherent to her ARV treatment because she felt this could make her HIV worse. But she also felt so tired of having to always take medication and having to deal with the many problems she faced in trying to make sure she did take her medication in the way she had been told she should do so at the clinic.

*(Adapted from stories of with youth living with HIV on ARV treatment)*

**Scenario 2**

**Barriers and facilitators to antiretroviral treatment (ART) among teenagers living with HIV**

In District A in Botswana, health facility managers and staff providing services to youth living with HIV on ARV treatment are concerned that there is has been a decline in consistent ART adherence among some of the youth living with HIV who attend the health facilities. They want to conduct a study to determine the extent of the problem of poorer ART adherence and the factors associated with this among their youth clients. They wish to use this information in programming interventions that may assist their youth clients to improve their ART adherence.

## Assignment 1 questions

1. Using the two scenarios above, describe in principle, the key elements of a quantitative approach and those of a qualitative approach and discuss the key differences between the two approaches.
2. Identify which one of the scenarios is best suited to a qualitative research approach and which to a quantitative approach. You need to justify your answer. Do this by categorising the two scenarios in terms of the following:
   1. What type of questions does each scenario seek to answer (*why*, *what*, and *how many* type of questions)? Give you answer in detail, giving your reasons.
   2. What type *theoretical approach* is most appropriate to each scenario (i.e. interpretivist, positivist etc.) and why? (i.e. justify your answer).
   3. What *type of data collection* method does each study use? Justify your answer by describing what the data would look like.
   4. Discuss the limitations of a quantitative research approach: What types of research issues/questions in each scenario would you not be able address using this type of research approach?
   5. Discuss the limitations of a qualitative research approach: What types of research issues/questions in each scenario would you not be able answer with a quantitative approach?
3. Describe and discuss in what type of scenario using this same topic, would a

*mixed method* approach be possibly appropriate.

### IMPORTANT: PLEASE SEE THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA TABLE BELOW FOR THE ALLOCATION OF MARKS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

**GUIDELINES WHEN WRITING YOUR ASSIGNMENT**

* Remember before you write up your assignment to pose any questions or ask about lack of clarity on the assignment or module materials and/or the readings for the assignment.
* Don't leave things too late*. It is very valuable to take advantage of being able to send in a draft for your lecturer to comment on* – this will help you to keep

on the right track for the assignment.

* If you submit a draft assignment, read carefully through the comments made when you are revising this for your final assignment. Check off one by one

that you have addressed all the comments and have taken the advice into

account.

* Assignments must be typed in 1.5 line-spacing using 12pt Times New Roman, with page layout set to A4.
* There is not a word limit for this assignment, however, remember to keep it focused on the answering the assignment questions. Keep to the point and be

as succinct as possible - a longer assignment does not necessarily mean a

better assignment.

* Make sure you have referenced literature or sources in a correct and uniform style. Adhere to standards of academic integrity through appropriate citation

and referencing of sources of information that you use. You should use the

Harvard style of referencing, as this is convention in the UWC SOPH and in Public Health more generally. There are several variations on the Harvard Style of referencing format (See for example the variations in SOPH Academic Handbook; the UCT Harvard Style of referencing Guide that we have uploaded on this iKamva site and if you are using Mendeley). Any one of the variations in format is acceptable, as long as the one you choose is used consistently.

* Proof read your assignment to check for spelling and grammatical errors before submitting.
* Don’t forget that you need to upload your assignment on iKamva as a word document file by the assignment due date. You should not send your

assignment in by email to either one of the course lecturers or the

administrators.

## IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN ASSIGNMENT ASSESSMENT

* Shows evidence of having worked through ideas contained in the Module Guide and in the readings and having understood study approaches and the

differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches, designs and methods.

* Expresses ideas clearly and succinctly, using accurate vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

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| **ASSSESSMENT CRITERIA PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH: ASSIGNMENT 1** | | | |
| **Sections** | **Assessment Criteria** | **Comments** | **Marks** |
| **1. Study approaches** | * Recognise key elements of quantitative approach (5) * Recognise key elements of qualitative approach (5) * Discusses key differences (5) |  | /15 |
| **2. Study methods and applications** | * Correct identification of   **Qualitative** approach; (5) and   * Qualitative methods i.t.o.:   + Type of questions (5)   + Theoretical research approach (5)   + Data collection (5)   + Limitations (5) |  | /30 |
| * Correct identification of   **Quantitative** approach (5) and   * Quantitative methods i.t.o.:   + Type of questions (5)   + Theoretical research approach (5)   + Data collection (5)   + Limitations (5) |  | /30 |
| **3. Mixed methods** | * Appropriate application of mixed methods approach (10) |  | /10 |
| **General** | * Academic writing (5) * Referencing is accurate (5) |  | /10 |
| **Draft** | * Convincing draft handed in time |  | /5 |
| **TOTAL** |  |  | /100 |

# Assignment 2: Beginning to write research proposals

### (60% of module mark)

***You should have completed all the Units in the PHR module guide and its associated readings and tasks to complete assignment 2.***

For assignment 2, choose a topic of interest to you for possible research (this may be, but does not have to be on the topic you are thinking of focusing on for you MPH mini-dissertation) and include the following:

1. i) Write an introduction explaining why you want to do this study (i.e. describe the background to your proposed study topic.
   1. Identify your study problem and why it is important
   2. Describe the study setting (the geographic area/site where you propose to do the study) and provide some background information on this study

setting (i.e. provide us with some background context as to why this

setting is appropriate).

1. i) Write a literature review consisting of articles related to your proposed study.
   1. In addition, choose two of the articles that you have included in your literature review in b i) above and critically review/appraise them in terms of the methods used and the value of their results for your study.
2. i) Describe your proposed study’s research approach (qualitative or quantitative) and why this is most appropriate for your proposed research.
   1. Describe you proposed study design and explain why this is most

appropriate to your proposed research.

1. Document your proposed study aim, objectives and the purpose of your study

(i.e. the purpose is what will it contribute to new knowledge or practice).

f) Write up a paragraph on the research ethics considerations for your proposed research.

### IMPORTANT: PLEASE SEE THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA TABLE BELOW FOR THE ALLOCATION OF MARKS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

**GUIDELINES WHEN WRITING YOUR ASSIGNMENT**

* Remember before you write up your assignment to pose any questions or ask about lack of clarity on the assignment or module materials and/or the readings for the assignment.
* Don't leave things too late*. It is very valuable to take advantage of being able to send in a draft for your lecturer to comment on* – this will help you to keep on the right track for the assignment.
* If you submit a draft assignment, read carefully through the comments made when you are revising this for your final assignment. Check off one by one

that you have addressed all the comments and have taken the advice into

account.

* Assignments must be typed in 1.5 line-spacing using 12pt Times New Roman, with page layout set to A4.
* There is not a word limit for this assignment, however, remember to keep it focused on the answering the assignment questions. Keep to the point and be

as succinct as possible - a longer assignment does not necessarily mean a better assignment.

* Make sure you have referenced literature or sources in a correct and uniform style. Adhere to standards of academic integrity through appropriate citation

and referencing of sources of information that you use. You should use the

Harvard style of referencing, as this is convention in the UWC SOPH and in Public Health more generally. There are several variations on the Harvard

Style of referencing format (See for example the variations in SOPH Academic

Handbook; the UCT Harvard Style of referencing Guide that we have uploaded on this iKamva site and if you are using Mendeley). Any one of the

variations in format is acceptable, as long as the one you choose is used consistently.

* Proof read your assignment to check for spelling and grammatical errors before submitting.
* Don’t forget that you need to upload your assignment on iKamva as a word document file by the assignment due date. You should not send your

assignment in by email to either one of the course lecturers or the

administrators.

**SOME IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN ASSIGNMENT ASSESSMENT**

Shows evidence of having worked through ideas contained in the Module Guide and in the readings and having understood study approaches and the differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches, designs and methods.

Expresses ideas clearly and succinctly, using accurate vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

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| **PHR ASSIGNMENT 2 : ASSESSMENT CRITERIA** | | | |
| **Introduction** | * Introduction and background to   the study topic (10)   * Clear identification of research problem and its importance (5) * Clear description of study setting (5)    |  | 20 |
| **Literature** | * Literature selected for review is   relevant to the proposed study and adequately reviewed in  terms of breadth and depth (15)   * Two articles selected for critical appraisal and appropriately evaluated on the basis of their contribution to information and method value (5) |  | 20 |
| **Research**  **approach** | * Choice of research approach is   appropriate for proposed study (motivation) (5)   * Motivates clearly why study design is best suited to the   proposed research (10) |  | 15 |
| **Aims**  **Objectives and purpose** | * Clarity of aim, objectives and   purpose, in terms of their relevance to the research problem   * + aim (5)   + objectives (5)   + purpose (5) |  | 15 |
| **Ethics**  **statement** | * Ethics principles are discussed   in relation to the study; including procedure described  for ensuring participant  informed consent and confidentiality of data is adequate (15) |  | 15 |
| **Layout and**  **Referencing** | * Academic style of writing and layout (5) * Referencing is accurate (5) |  | 10 |
| Draft | Convincing draft submitted (5) |  | 5 |
| **Total** |  |  | **100** |

# Developing a work plan

The table below presents a week-by-week work plan timetable. Identify the period you have to complete this module*.* You probably also have a second or even third module running concurrently. One way to manage several modules at the same time is to study one module from Monday to Wednesday, and the other from Thursday to Saturday. Educationally this is positive because the two modules should complement each other.

This module is made up of four units, each of which consists of between three and one study sessions. A session may take several study periods to complete e.g. up to 6 hours. You are expected to work consistently and regularly through the sessions, but you must prepare the assignments as you work through them. Leave the week before hand-in for finalising an assignment. You are encouraged to develop your own work plan in terms of your commitments. Guidelines are provided in the *SOPH Academic Handbook*. There are two columns for you to work in: one is for this module*.* The other is for your second module if this applies to you. Your work plan should take both modules and their assignment deadlines into account. If you have three, please draw your own timetable. Once you have worked out a plan, put a copy of it in an obvious place, e.g. above your work table, and refer to it daily, adjusting it if you slip behind or race ahead!

**WORK PLAN FOR *PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH***

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| **WEEK** | **STARTING** | **YOUR OWN WORK PLAN**  ***Public Health Research*** | **YOUR OWN WORK PLAN FOR….** |
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SOPH, UWC: *Public Health Research* – Module Introduction xviii