

One Health Programme

The One Health concept places focus on the fact that health of human populations is connected to environmental and animal health. One Health is defined as “a collaborative, multi-sectoral, and transdisciplinary approach working at the local, regional, national, and global levels with the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment”. The areas of work in which a One Health approach is particularly relevant include food safety, the control of zoonoses (diseases that can spread between animals and humans, such as flu (including COVID-19, SARS, MERS, rabies and Rift Valley Fever), environmental pollution where e.g. the trophic transfer of pollutants from the environment into humans can lead to health risks; and combatting antibiotic resistance (when bacteria change after being exposed to antibiotics and become more difficult to treat). In February 2021, the World Health Organization Director-General, Tedros Ghebreyesus said that “It is clear, however, that One Health must be about more than zoonoses” and spelled out “we cannot protect human health without considering the impact of human activities that disrupt ecosystems, encroach on habitats, and further drive climate change”.

The areas of work in which a One Health approach is particularly relevant include food safety, the control of zoonoses (diseases that can spread between animals and humans, environmental pollution where e.g. the trophic transfer of pollutants from the environment into humans can lead to health risks; and combatting antibiotic resistance. The programme consists of six core modules (Introduction to One Health; Introduction to Environmental Management; Zoonoses; Transdisciplinary Health Promotion; Advanced Ecotoxicology; Research Project) and two elective modules that may be selected from any of the modules presented within the BSc Environmental Sciences qualification. Students may be admitted to the Bachelor of Science Honours in Environmental Sciences with One Health given that they are in possession of a BSc degree with subjects appropriate to the chosen programme, passed at NQF level 7 with at least 60%. Selection is furthermore based on a student’s academic record and other proven appropriate prior learning, taking into account the student’s background and potential.

