PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	MA Urban and Regional Planning
	The MA Urban and Regional Planning is a Masters degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Postgraduate Diploma in Urban and Regional Planning
	Postgraduate Certificate in Urban and Regional Planning
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Marylebone Road
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	MA - usually 1 year full time or 2 years part time
	PG Diploma - up to 4 years part time
	PG Certificate – up to 2 years part time
QAA subject benchmarking group(s):	
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	MA has RTPI accreditation as a combined planning degree. *(Note: Neither Postgraduate Diploma nor Postgraduate Certificate on its own meets RTPI requirements for Initial Planning Education.)*
Date of course validation/review:	November 2016
Date of programme specification approval:	Jan 2017
Valid for cohorts:	From 2017/18
Course Leader:	Duncan Bowie
Course URL:	westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate
Westminster Course Code:	UBPPUBP
JACS code:	K400
UKPASS code:	004384 (MA) 052063 (PG Dip) 052064 (PG Cert)

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all undergraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply

For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply

Aims of the course

The aim of the course is to enable students to develop a broad understanding of the knowledge, skills and values relevant to spatial planning and sustainable development, and an ability to apply these to professional practice. It aims to equip students with the understanding and skills to enter a career involving the management of the spatial dimension of social, economic, technological, environmental and political changes. The course examines planning in both urban and rural areas, but the emphasis is on urban planning. The course aims also to provide students with the opportunities to explore ideas, perspectives and debates to a considerable degree of depth in one distinct area of planning.

Through the educational programme provided, the course aims to meet the needs of employers for staff able to undertake critical thinking about space and place as the basis for action and intervention. The MA course aims also to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes that the RTPI defines as those necessary for accreditation, and to achieve the first stage in the process of achieving professional membership. It aims to instil in students the positive attitude to lifelong learning that is necessary to practise as a professional planner.

The MA course is a combined planning programme: it provides both the spatial and specialist elements of planning education. The proportion of the course devoted to each element is in accordance with the requirements of the RTPI Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education: two-thirds of the course is devoted to the spatial planning element, and one-third is devoted to the specialist element. The latter includes a significant element of investigative work, culminating in the submission of a dissertation.

The Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate provide routes for other built environment professionals to deepen their understanding of the knowledge, skills and values relevant to spatial planning and sustainable development, but neither on its own meets the RTPI requirements for initial education in spatial planning. The Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate on their own do not fulfil the requirement of the RTPI Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education, but if students have already have an accredited RTPI specialist qualification, it may be possible to obtain combined RTPI accreditation. If applicants to the Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate are seeking RTPI combined accreditation, they should consult the course leader.

The course strongly emphasises the importance of inter-disciplinary working. Professionals from a range of disciplines working together is seen as essential to creating sustainable communities. On some modules students are taught alongside international planning, urban design and housing students, which gives students an understanding of the role of different disciplines and the experience of working collaboratively across disciplines.

The objectives of the programmes are:

To provide students with a critical understanding of sustainable development and how spatial planning can enhance people's lives by improving the quality of places and the organization of space, and can contribute to mitigation and adaption to climate change;

To equip students with a critical awareness of the social, economic and environmental forces which influence spatial requirements for land and resources in different local, regional, national and supra-national contexts, and the activities of public, private and voluntary institutions in responding to these forces;

To enhance the students' critical understanding of, and expertise in, the wide range of skills, techniques, strategies and methods of policy formulation and implementation which are essential for effective working in the planning and related professions in making and managing places;

To provide students with an understanding of the roles of other professionals involved in the production of the built environment and to promote effective inter-disciplinary working;

To develop students' abilities to critically analyse issues and to adapt to a changing context, and to develop in students the qualities of a reflective practitioner who sees the acquisition of knowledge and skills as a lifelong process;

To provide students with the ability to explore ideas, perspectives and debates to a considerable degree of depth in one distinct area of planning (MA only).

Employment and further study opportunities
Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses

- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students

- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision

- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

Staff teaching on the course have excellent links with practice and are actively involved in Planning Aid for London, the Planning Officers Society and a number of the RTPI networks. Visiting lecturers regularly share their experience of practice with students.

Part-time students work in a range of planning agencies including government, regional bodies, local governments and the private sector. Graduates from the full-time course take up opportunities in all of these sectors.

Learning outcomes
Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These threshold statements of achievement are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course. The MA in Urban and Regional Planning has been designed to meet the RTPI's learning outcomes. The RTPI learning outcomes listed in the matrix below focus primarily on the type of knowledge and subject specific skills that should be acquired by the students, and do not disaggregate the key transferable and employability skills that the course provides.

Transferable and employability skills are developed in specific modules, but are embedded in and developed throughout the MA. Career management skills are developed in a number of modules, but students will also receive additional guidance on careers and employment opportunities.

The learning outcomes for the Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate will vary depending on the combination of modules chosen.

RTPI Core Learning Outcomes Graduates of the course should be able to:	Planning Theory and Practice 1	Planning Theory and Practice 2	Making and Managing Places	Sustainable Cities & Neighbourhoods	Research Methods	Skills for Planning Practice	Specialist Module	Dissertation
Explain and demonstrate how spatial planning operates within the context of institutional and legal frameworks.	IA	CA	CA					CA
Generate integrated and well substantiated responses to spatial planning challenges.	I	I	CA	CA				CA
Reflect on the arguments for and against spatial planning and particular theoretical approaches, and assess what can be learnt from experience of spatial planning in different contexts and spatial scales.	IA	CA		CA				CA
Demonstrate how efficient resource management helps to deliver effective spatial planning	I	I	CA	CA				CA
Explain the political and ethical nature of spatial planning and reflect on how planners work effectively within democratic decision-making structures.	I	CA	I					
Explain the contribution that planning can make to the built and natural environment and in particular recognise the implications of climate change.	I	I	I	CA				
Debate the concept of rights and the legal and practical implications of representing these rights in planning decision making process.	I	CA	I					
Evaluate different development strategies and the practical application of development finance; assess the implications for generating added value for the community.			CA					
Explain the principles of equality and equality of opportunity in relation to spatial planning in order to positively promote the involvement of different communities, and evaluate the importance and effectiveness of community engagement in the planning process	I	CA						

I = outcome is introduced to students here
C = further work / consolidation of outcome is done here
A = outcome is assessed here

RTPI Core Learning Outcomes Graduates of the course should be able to:	Planning Theory and Practice 1	Planning Theory and Practice 2	Making and Managing Places	Sustainable Cities & Neighbourhoods	Research Methods	Skills for Planning Practice	Specialist Module	Dissertation
Evaluate the principles and processes of design for creating high quality places and enhancing the public realm for the benefit of all in society.			CA					
Demonstrate effective research, analytical, evaluative and appraisal skills and the ability to reach appropriate, evidence based decisions.	I	I	CA	CA	I	CA		CA
Recognise the role of communication skills in the planning process and the importance of working in an inter-disciplinary context, and be able to demonstrate negotiation, mediation, advocacy and leadership skills.	I	I	CA	CA				
Distinguish the characteristics of a professional, including the importance of upholding the highest standards of ethical behaviour and a commitment to lifelong learning and critical reflection so as to maintain and develop professional competence.	I	CA	C			C		

I = outcome is introduced to students here
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A = outcome is assessed here

RTPI Specialist learning outcomes Graduates of the course should be able to::	Planning Theory and Practice 1	Planning Theory and Practice 2	Making and Managing Places	Sustainable Cities & Neighbourhoods	Research Methods	Skills for Planning Practice	Specialist Module	Dissertation
Engage in theoretical, practical and ethical debate at the forefront of the area of the specialism in the context of spatial planning	I						CA	CA
Evaluate the social, economic, environmental and political context for the area of specialism.	I						CA	CA
Evaluate the distinctive contribution of the specialism to the making of place and the mediation of space.	I						CA	CA
Demonstrate the relationship within a spatial planning context of the particular area of specialism to other specialist areas of expertise.	I						CA	C
Demonstrate the type and quality of skills that would be expected of a graduate from this specialism undertaking the practice experience period of the APC.							I	CA
Assess the contribution of the specialism to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.				I			CA	

I = outcome is introduced to students here
C = further work / consolidation of outcome is done here
A = outcome is assessed here

Specific skills
Graduates of the course should be able to demonstrate skills in:
- Critical analysis
- Research, including problem definition, data collection and qualitative and quantitative analysis
- Written and oral communication
- Inter-disciplinary team working, negotiation, and collaborative working.
- Understanding diversity and difference in all contexts
- Design awareness and ability to understand and present information graphically
- Independent learning and a methodological approach to exploring an issue or problem in depth
- Self management including setting targets, managing time and resources, working to deadlines and balancing conflicting demands.
- Personal development planning

Learning, teaching and assessment methods

Teaching combines lectures, seminars and workshops with individual and group tutorials. Assessment for all core modules is 100% course work and for all option modules except transport option for which the assessment is 50% course work and 50% examination. The course delivery encourages reflective and critical thinking, helping students to extend existing skills and competencies.
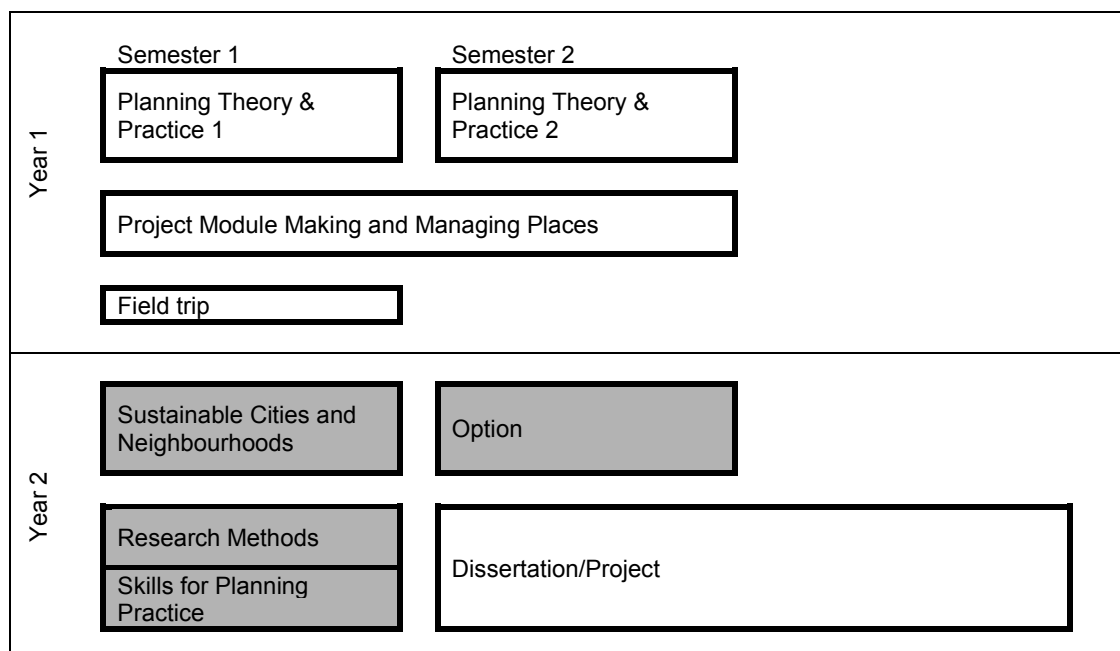
Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the MA course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate MA students are expected to complete 180 credits in one academic year. Part time students will normally complete the 180 credits in two academic years.

The Postgraduate Diploma and the Postgraduate Certificate are available as target and exit awards. To obtain the Postgraduate Diploma students must successfully complete 120 credits, including core modules worth a minimum of 100 credits. To obtain the Postgraduate Certificate students must successfully complete 60 credits, including core modules worth a minimum of 40 credits.

The field trip is an important element of the MA course. It takes place in the first semester of Masters students' studies. It introduces students to key skills and knowledge which students develop further in other modules. Although the assessment for the field trip does not contribute to students' overall mark, it is compulsory for Masters students and students must pass the assessment to be awarded a Masters degree.

MA Urban and Regional Planning

	Semester 1	Semester 2
Year 1	Planning Theory & Practice 1	Planning Theory & Practice 2
	Project Module Making and Managing Places	
	Field trip	
Year 2	Sustainable Cities and Neighbourhoods	Option
	Research Methods	Dissertation/Project
	Skills for Planning Practice	

Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
7PLAN012W	Planning Theory and Practice 1	Core	20	10
7PLAN013W	Planning Theory and Practice 2	Core	20	10
7PLAN009W	Planning Field Trip	Core	0	0
7PLAN007W	Making and Managing Places	Core	40	20
7PLAN019W	Sustainable Cities and Neighbourhoods	Core	20	10
7PLAN017W	Research Methods	Core	10	5
7PLAN018W	Skills for Planning Practice	Core	10	5
7PLAN003W	Dissertation	Core	40	20
7PLAN015W	Public Realm	Option	20	10
7HOUS02W	Housing and Regeneration	Option	20	10
7PLAN029	Environmental Policy, Assessment and Climate Change	Option	20	10
7TRAN013W	Land Use Planning and Transport	Option	20	10

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year.

Academic regulations
The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations

How will you be supported in your studies?

Course Management
The course is in the Department of Transport and Planning within the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment. Duncan Bowie is the Course Leader.

Academic Support
Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Faculty Registry Office. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students

Learning Support

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students[1] can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student Affairs department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University.

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2004. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course is also monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from Course Committees, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. Each Faculty puts in to place an action plan. This may for example include making changes on the way the module is taught, assessed or even how the course is structured in order to improve the course, in such cases an approval process is in place.

A Course review takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with review panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years e.g. from Course Committees is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through Course Committees students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to Committee to expressly represent the views of their peer. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.

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[1] Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

- Each Faculty also has its own Faculty Student Forum with student representatives; this enables wider discussions across the Faculty. Student representatives are also represented on key Faculty and university committees.

- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.

- The University also has an annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey or PTES which helps us compare how we are doing with other institutions, to make changes that will improve what we do in future and to keep doing the things that you value.