

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

### Course record information

Name and level of final award	<b>MA Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship)</b> The Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship) 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 (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship) Postgraduate Certificate in Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship)
Awarding body/institution	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution	Recognised Body
Location of delivery	Marylebone
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month	Masters: 2 years part time day Postgraduate Diploma: Up to 4 years part-time day Postgraduate Certificate: Up to 2 years part-time day September start.
<a href="#">QAA subject benchmarking group(s)</a>	Town and Country Planning
Professional statutory or regulatory body	MAURP (Royal Town Planning Institute Professional Apprenticeship) has RTPI accreditation as a combined planning degree; AND Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education (IfATE): Standard – Chartered Town Planner (Degree – Level 7) Ref. No. ST0536
Date of course validation/Revalidation	April 2020
Date of programme specification approval	June 2020
Valid for cohorts	from 2021/22

Course Leader	Robin Crompton
Course URL	<a href="https://westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate">westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate</a>
Westminster course code	PMPLH07A (PT)
HECoS code	100199: Urban and Regional Planning 100197: Planning
UKPASS code	

### Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum [entry requirements](#) for all postgraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

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](https://westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply)

### Recognition of Prior Learning

*Applicants with prior certificated or experiential learning at the same level of the qualification for which they wish to apply are advised to visit the following page for further information:* [westminster.ac.uk/recognition-of-prior-certified-learning](https://westminster.ac.uk/recognition-of-prior-certified-learning)

### Aims of the course

The MA Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship) has been designed to give students the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to practise professionally as a spatial planner in a variety of private, public and community contexts. Building on the University's experience of delivering postgraduate courses in town planning for more than 80 years, it has been designed to meet the growing employer needs for staff who can investigate changes in the natural and built environments, cope with the challenges of sustainable development, in particular climate change, and debate and critically reflect upon the knowledge and values underpinning current approaches to land use development. It examines planning across diverse contexts and scales, but focuses in particular on planning in, and for, towns, cities, and urban regions in the UK. Students are taught by qualified and dedicated staff who possess vast industry, research and teaching experience, get the opportunity to hear and learn from guest speakers from the world of practice, and moreover benefit from studying in a genuinely multidisciplinary environment, consisting of a broad range of built environment disciplines, including (but not limited to) urban design, transport planning, architecture, interior design as well as property and construction.

Professionally accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and covering both the 'spatial' and 'specialist' elements of the RTPI's requirements for initial 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 are devoted to the spatial planning element, defined by the RTPI (2012) as the 'main principles relevant to the making of place and the mediation of space, in particular sustainability'. And one-third is devoted to the specialist element, providing students with the opportunity to 'explore ideas, perspectives and debates to a considerable degree of depth in one distinct area of planning' (RTPI, 2012).

This course specifically addresses all the detailed apprenticeship standards approved for the Chartered Town Planner (Degree) by the Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education (IfATE) with the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) acting as the regulating body (RTPI, reference: ST0536, 22 March 2019). Student practitioners attending the RTPI-approved Westminster School of Architecture and Cities will engage with a professionally-delivered and soundly-based course of planning education.

Based at the University's modern Marylebone campus in central London, the main aims of the course can be summarised as follows:

- To equip students with a critical awareness of the complexity of interrelated forces shaping spatial development, the key challenges that surround current trajectories of development across diverse contexts and scales, and the role of planning in addressing them.
- To provide students with an understanding of the historical and theoretical foundations of spatial planning, its context, purpose, and scope, as well as different planning roles in public, private and voluntary sectors.
- To provide in-depth knowledge of key aspects and dimensions of sustainable development and spatial planning's contribution to the creation (and maintenance) of sustainable communities and places.
- To provide students with practical understanding of the plan-making and planning decision-making process and equip them with knowledge of, and expertise in, skills, techniques, strategies and methods essential for effective working in planning practice and related professions.
- To equip students with key transferable skills, including analytical and research skills, verbal and written communication, as well as negotiation and presenting skills that are sought after by employers.
- To develop an understanding of the values and ethics of working as a professional in the field of planning and develop students' ability to exercise critical thinking and independent judgement.
- To develop in students the qualities of a reflective practitioner who sees the acquisition of knowledge and skills as a lifelong process and is able to respond – and adapt – to changing roles and contexts within the profession.
- 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).
- To empower and broaden knowledge and understanding of town planning.

As a result, our programme creates critical-minded, well-rounded, and highly employable graduates who are:

- well-prepared for rewarding careers in a wide variety of organisations within the public, private, and non-profit sectors involved in planning and development;
- equipped with the necessary knowledges, skills, and confidence to engage with the manifold challenges and opportunities related to spatial development and planning; and
- able to readily adapt to changing circumstances and environments and excel in what constitutes a highly dynamic professional field, also
- equipped to become effective professional planners in terms of skills and behaviours with regard to the RTPI's Code of Professional Conduct.

In addition to the MA qualification, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate options are also available. Enabling students to access the course at a point that is relevant to their circumstances, achieve credits and leave at a point that specifically meets their needs.

## **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.

Planning is often cited as one of the most employable degrees with great career prospects both domestically as well worldwide and students completing the MA in Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship) course have an excellent record of progressing their careers in planning, design, and development, as well as in areas such as economic development, urban regeneration, and transport. Many alumni of the course are now in senior positions in local planning authorities and private consultancies and/or have used the programme as a way to change the direction of their careers, towards new jobs and/or new areas of specialisation.

In addition to professional practice talks and workshops shared across the university/college, the School of Architecture and Cities regularly invites guests from a wide range of public and private sector organisations to share their experience of practice, giving students additional opportunities to hone their networking skills and increase their employability. Students also benefit from studying in the heart of London in close proximity to a broad array of relevant institutions such as the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and The Building Centre, and from working with a committed School with excellent industry links.

The MA (and its intermediate awards) provides a basis to support many opportunities for further study in and outside the field of planning, including progression to the School of Architecture and Cities' Doctoral programme. The University has a dedicated Career Service team which is always at hand to assist students.

## **Course 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 (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship) has been designed to reflect the academic, professional and employment demands of the discipline and meet the qualification descriptor for level 7 awards as set out by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The course also meets the RTPI's Core and Specialist learning outcomes; and more specifically the RTPI's Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours Matrix for Degree Apprenticeship Courses as set out in the Appendices to this document.

## **Key Course Learning Outcomes**

The ability to demonstrate:

- CLO1 a critical awareness of the complexity of interrelated forces shaping spatial development, the key challenges that surround current trajectories of development across diverse contexts and scales, and the role of planning in addressing them.
- CLO2 an understanding of the historical and theoretical foundations of spatial planning, its context, purpose, and scope, as well as different planning roles in public, private and voluntary sectors.
- CLO3 in-depth knowledge of key aspects and dimensions of sustainable development and spatial planning's contribution to the creation (and maintenance) of sustainable communities and places.
- CLO4 practical understanding of the plan-making and planning decision-making process and knowledge of, and expertise in, skills, techniques, strategies and methods essential for effective working in planning practice and related professions.
- CLO5 an understanding of the values and ethics of working as a professional in the field of planning and develop students' ability to exercise critical thinking and independent judgement.
- CLO6 an appreciation of the qualities of a reflective practitioner who sees the acquisition of knowledge and skills as a lifelong process and is able to respond – and adapt – to changing roles and contexts within the profession.
- CLO7 an in-depth understanding of ideas, perspectives and debates to a considerable degree of depth in one distinct area of planning (MA only).

### **Key transferable skills (KTS)**

- CLO8 Detailed knowledge of analytical and research skills and the ability to apply them in practice.
- CLO9 Detailed knowledge of verbal and written communication as well as presenting and negotiation skills and the ability to apply them in practice.
- CLO10 Detailed knowledge of project and self-management skills (e.g. setting targets, managing time and resources, working to deadlines and balancing conflicting demands) and the ability to apply them in practice.
- CLO11 Detailed knowledge of skills of reflective practice and the ability to apply them in practice

As an RTPI accredited course, these learning outcomes are aligned/consistent with the learning outcomes for postgraduate education by the Institute. A mapping of the course's intended learning outcomes onto the course's modules is detailed below and a mapping matrix relating the modules to the RTPI's learning outcomes appended to this document. The course meets the RTPI's Core and Specialist learning outcomes; and more specifically the RTPI's Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours Matrix for Degree Apprenticeship Courses as set out in the Appendices to this document.

### **Learning, teaching and assessment methods**

#### **Learning**

The course is delivered using a wide range of learning methods involving both directed and independent learning. Emphasis is placed on active, student-centred approaches such as problem-based learning and project-based learning that:

- integrate theory and practice
- stimulate independent learning, critical thinking and problem-solving
- allow students to learn from each other and hone their inter-personal skills
- contributes to the acquisition of key transferable skills sought after by employers.

#### **Teaching**

Teaching is delivered as a series of modules. Each module is a self-contained block of learning with a coherent set of aims and learning outcomes, and associated assessment processes. Typically, this involves a mix of lectures, seminars, and workshops, complemented by individual and group tutorials, e-learning and independent study.

In addition to the curriculum shared with students of the regular MA course, apprenticeship course students are required to attend four additional modules offered as block weeks at the beginning and end of each teaching year (in September and May). In year one, these block weeks will provide students with a grounding in the key academic and study skills necessary to succeed at Level 7 higher education study and help them develop the skills, knowledge and confidence required to competently undertake and complete their dissertation research. In the second year, the focus will be on providing a supportive and stimulating environment to help students approach their RTPI Assessment of Professional Competence qualifications, an important step on the way to becoming fully-fledged chartered planner, and learn about professional development, professional practice, and career progression.

An essential – and for MA/PG Diploma students compulsory - element of the course, is a field trip, typically to a European destination. It takes place in the first semester of students' studies and will be used to develop field based research skills and strategies, sharpen students' awareness of the context-boundedness of planning problems and responses, learn about innovative practices in managing change in cities and regions, reflect on the extent to which ideas and practices identified in one context can be effectively transferred to others, and provide a new perspective on planning issues back home.

In addition, MA students are required to complete a dissertation, which is a piece of independent, original research of 12,000 -15,000 words, to demonstrate expertise within a specific subject area and exercise transferable skills, for example time management, planning, research and communication.

## **Assessment**

Students are assessed using a variety of assessment methods including essays, reports, reflective assessments, a mock planning committee, presentations, examinations and other appropriate activities. Some modules also require students to work in groups and most include a formative assessment to help prepare students for the summative assessment counting towards the course mark and to the degree award. All MAURP (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship) students moreover undertake a dissertation project which requires independent research study and research project management, supported by a supervising tutor.

## **Course structure**

This section gives an introduction to the course structure and presents the core and option modules available and their credit value. MA Apprenticeship students take all core modules and choose one specialist option module. Because modules may vary in length and content, they also vary in credits earned. These part time students will normally complete the 180 credits in two academic years. On some modules students are taught alongside students from other built environment postgraduate courses (e.g. International Planning and Sustainable Development and Urban Design), facilitating genuinely interdisciplinary learning and giving students an understanding of the role of different disciplines and professions involved in the production of the built environment.

Apprenticeship students will attend four Block weeks, identified earlier, designed to develop their academic skills and excel in their studies. Our vision is the empower our students to become independent and reflective learners and support them to achieve their full potential.

**MA URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship) (Part-time)**

	Semester 1	Semester 2	August
<b>Year 1</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">7PLAN046W - BLOCK WEEK 1 – Academic and Study Skills</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin-top: 10px;">7PLAN012W – Planning Theory &amp; Practice 1 (20)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin-top: 10px;">7PLAN007W – Making and Managing Places (40)</div> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin-top: 10px;">7PLAN009W – Planning Field Trip</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">7PLAN013W – Planning Theory &amp; Practice 2 (20)</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">7PLAN047W - BLOCK WEEK 2 – Research Skills for Dissertations (Academic and Study Skills)</div>
<b>Year 2</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">7PLAN048W - BLOCK WEEK 3 – Introduction to APC + Log Book</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin-top: 10px;">7PLAN019W – Sustainable Cities and Neighbourhoods (20)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin-top: 10px;">7PLAN035W – Planning Research: Methods and Skills (20)</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">Option Module (20)</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">7PLAN049W - BLOCK WEEK 4 – Professional Practice &amp; Reflection on the APC</div>
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">7PLAN003W – MAURP Dissertation / Policy Implementation Project &amp; Colloquium (40)</div>		

..... = not credit-bearing but compulsory elements of the MA Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship) Course

<b>Credit Level 7</b>				
<b>Module code</b>	<b>Module title</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>UK credit</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
7PLAN046W	BLOCK WEEK 1: Academic and Study Skills	Core	0	0
7PLAN047W	BLOCK WEEK 2: Research Skills for Dissertations	Core	0	0
7PLAN048W	BLOCK WEEK 3: Introduction to the RTPi Assessment of Professional Competence and Log Book	Core	0	0
7PLAN049W	BLOCK WEEK 4: Professional Practice and Reflection for the APC	Core	0	0
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
7PLAN035W	Planning Research: Methods and Skills	Core	20	10
7PLAN003W	MAURP Dissertation / Policy Implementation Project & Colloquium	Core	40	20
7PLAN032W	Reflective Practice for Spatial Planning (PG Certificate in Spatial Planning only)	Core	10	5
7TRAN013W	Land Use Planning and Transport	Option	20	10
7TRAN027W	Streets, Places and Active Transport	Option	20	10
7PLAN029W	Environmental Policy, Assessment and Climate Change	Option	20	10
7HOUS002W	Housing and Urban Regeneration	Option	20	10
7PLAN040W	Communities towards Sustainability – Public Engagement	Option	20	10
7PLAN010W	Planning for Risk & Resilience	Option	20	10
7TRAN037W	Modifying Transport Behaviour: Theory, Practice and Politics	Option	20	10
7PLAN041W	Conservation and Heritage	Option	20	10
7PLAN033W	Emerging Landscapes and Urban Ecologies	Option	20	10
7PLAN038W	Place and Experience in Design of Urban Spaces	Option	20	10
7TRAN036W	Information Management Applications for Urban Planning	Option	20	10

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces may mean you cannot do your first choice of modules.



## **Professional Body Accreditation or other external references**

The MA has RTPI accreditation as a combined planning course. On successful completion of the first year of the MA Apprenticeship course students can become licentiates of the RTPI. After two years' experience in practice or 14.4 months after graduation, they may make a submission for their Assessment of Professional Competence and, if successful, are then entitled to full RTPI membership. More information on routes to membership can be obtained from the RTPI website.

## **Academic regulations**

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at [westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations](http://westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations). In some cases course specific regulations may be applicable.

## **How will you be supported in your studies?**

### **Course Management**

The course team is comprised of a Course Leader, who is responsible for the organisation and management of the Apprenticeship course, as well as faculty members contributing significantly to its delivery. The Course Leader acts as the students' main point of contact for all questions and concerns pertaining to the course but each student is also allocated a personal tutor, who is usually a member of the course team, to whom they can turn for advice regarding academic and personal matters. The Course Leaders of the MAURP course and MAURP (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship) manage the overall programme together.

Individual modules are led by named module leaders who are the first points of contact for module-specific enquiries, e.g. regarding coursework and assessment.

Both courses are overseen by two External Examiners, one of whom is a professional practitioner, the other an academic, who submit annual reports on the standards and quality of the programme, verify assessment decisions and oversee the overall academic progress of students.

Continuous monitoring and review of the student learning experience is ensured through various activities. Amongst other things, the course team holds annual module and course reviews in which modules are reviewed and discussed amongst members of staff following feedback from students, external examiners and module pass rates. And there are regular course team meetings throughout the academic year to which elected student representatives are invited to put forward their views and discuss matters relating to the course.

### **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 Campus Registry. 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. Further information on Blackboard can be found at [westminster.ac.uk/blackboard](http://westminster.ac.uk/blackboard).

## **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. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at [westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development](http://westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development).

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students<sup>1</sup> 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 College. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

## **Support Services**

The University of Westminster Student and Academic Services 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. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at [westminster.ac.uk/student-advice](http://westminster.ac.uk/student-advice). The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University. Further information on UWSU can be found at [westminster.ac.uk/students-union](http://westminster.ac.uk/students-union).

## **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 College 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 evidence of student achievement, reports from external examiners in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course.

A Course revalidation 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 Revalidation panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

- Through student engagement activities at Course/Module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Course representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the course representatives.
- There are also School Representatives appointed jointly by the University and the Students' Union who meet with senior School staff to discuss wider issues affecting student experience across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College 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.

**Please note:** This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.

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