Programme Specification

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER⊞

Course record information

Name and level of final award	• Master of Arts - Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship) The award is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible
Name and level of intermediate awards	• Postgraduate Diploma (Pg Dip) - Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship) • Postgraduate Certificate (Pg Cert) - 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	Primary: Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	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
Westminster course title, mode of attendance and standard length	• MA Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship), Part-time day, September start - 2 years standard length
Valid for cohorts	From 2025/6

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: https://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply.

Aims of the programme

The MA Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Professional Apprenticeship) has been designed to give apprentices 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. Apprentices 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.

This Masters course is professionally accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and covers both the 'spatial' and 'specialist' elements as required by the RTPI's Policy Statement for initial planning education. Two-thirds of the course are devoted to the spatial planning element, and one-third of the course is devoted to the specialist element, providing apprentices with the opportunity to explore ideas, perspectives and debates to a considerable degree of depth in one distinct area of planning.

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 RTPI acting as the regulating body that conducts the End Point Assessment. Apprentice practitioners attending the RTPI-approved Westminster School of Architecture and Cities will engage with a professionally-delivered and soundly-based course of planning education.

The course is based at the University's Marylebone campus in central London and main aims of the course can be summarised as follows:

- To equip apprentices 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 apprentices 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 support apprentices in their professional development and the gaining of work based experiences;

- To equip apprentices with the core competences that will allow apprentices to gain Chartered Planner status with the Royal Town Planning Institute;

- 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 apprentices 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 apprentices 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 apprentices' ability to exercise critical thinking and independent judgement;

- To develop in apprentices 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 apprentices with the ability to explore ideas, perspectives and debates by taking on a professional case study within their workplace (MA only); and

- To empower and broaden knowledge and understanding of town planning and its role within the community.

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. This flexibility enables apprentices 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.

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Planning is often cited as one of the most employable degrees with great career prospects both domestically and worldwide. Students completing the regular MA in Urban and Regional Planning course have had 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. The MA Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Apprenticeship) course will strengthen these positive experiences with additional teaching that supports apprentices in their workplace where theory is applied to the real world working environment.

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 apprentices additional opportunities to hone their networking skills and increase their employability. Apprentices 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 Town Planning Institute, 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 the apprentices.

What will you be expected to achieve?

Course learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning.

These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

The overall knowledge and understanding you will gain from your course (KU)

Graduate attributes are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA)

Professional and personal practice learning outcomes are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (PPP)

Key transferable skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)

Level 7 course learning outcomes: upon completion of Level 7 you will be able to:

- CLO.01 The ability to demonstrate 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. (KU)

- CLO.02 The ability to demonstrate 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. (KU)

- CLO.03 The ability to demonstrate 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. (KU)

- CLO.04 The ability to demonstrate 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. (KU)

- CLO.05 The ability to demonstrate an understanding of the values and ethics of working as a professional in the field of planning and develop apprentices' ability to exercise critical thinking and independent judgement. (KU)

- CLO.06 The ability to demonstrate 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. (KU)

- CLO.07 The ability to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of ideas, perspectives and debates to a considerable degree of depth in one distinct area of planning (MA only). (KU)

- CLO.08 Detailed knowledge of analytical and research skills and the ability to apply them in practice. (KTS)

- CLO.09 Detailed knowledge of verbal and written communication as well as presenting and negotiation skills and the ability to apply them in practice. (KTS)

- CLO.10 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. (KTS)

- CLO.11 Detailed knowledge of skills of reflective practice and the ability to apply them in practice. (KTS)

How will you learn?

Learning methods

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

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

Teaching methods

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, apprentices are required to attend four additional modules offered as intensive professional practice weeks towards the beginning and end of each of the two years. Each professional practice week will assist and support the apprentices with the ability to allow the apprentices to monitor their individual skills against the RTPI key competencies as they progress towards the RTPI Assessment of Professional Competence. Additionally, each professional practice week will focus on a particular topic area (eg Decision Making, Historic Environment, Neighbourhood Planning etc) where two days will be dedicated Continuation of Professional Development days which will also be open for non-apprentice students to attend also. These intensive professional practice weeks will provide apprentices with a strong practical grounding to support academic and theory based content learnt throughout the course.

A mixture of theory based,vocational and work based skills will be a key advantage for the apprentices and their employers and will be 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 apprentices approach their RTPI Assessment of Professional Competence qualifications, an important step on the way to becoming 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 the apprentice's studies and will be used to develop field based research skills and strategies, sharpen apprentices' 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 apprentices 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 methods

Apprentices 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 apprentices to work in groups and most include a formative assessment to help prepare apprentices for the summative assessment counting towards the course mark and to the degree award. All apprentices undertake a dissertation project which requires independent research study and research project management, supported by a supervising tutor.

The Professional Practice Weeks require the apprentices to complete a personal reflective journal and a professional development plan, which are a large part of the essential elements needed to complete their Assessment of Professional Competence. The professional practice weeks are a way of enabling continuous review of the log book and reflective journal in order for apprentices to monitor their own performance and seek new learning opportunities from their employer where they need to complete further training with their employer during year 3 as they prepare for their End Point Assessment.

Course Structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits per year. Additional free text information on the choices may also be included, for example where students must choose one of two modules.. Course structures can be subject to change each

academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Modules

Level 7

Apprentices 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 apprentices will normally complete the 180 credits in two academic years. On some modules apprentices 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 apprentices an understanding of the role of different disciplines and professions involved in the production of the built environment.

Apprentices will attend four professional practice weeks that are designed to build their vocational skills and prepare them for the Assessment of Professional Competence during the 'third' year where apprentices undertake a number of case studies with their employer. Our vision is the empower our apprentices to become independent and reflective learners and support them to achieve their full potential.

The module 7PLAN050W End Point Assessment Level 7 must be passed in order to achieve the MA Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Apprenticeship).

Apprentices who intend to leave the course with a PG Cert in Spatial Planning are required to take 7PLAN032W Reflective Practice for Spatial Planning (10 credits).

Module Code	Module Title	Status	PT Year (where applicable)	UK credit	ECTS
7PLAN007W	Making and Managing Places	Core	1	40	20
7PLAN009W	Planning Field Trip	Core	1	0	0
7PLAN012W	Planning Theory and Practice 1	Core	1	20	10
7PLAN013W	Planning Theory and Practice 2	Core	1	20	10
7PLAN046W	Professional Planning Practice Week 1	Core	1	0	0
7PLAN047W	Professional Planning Practice Week 2	Core	1	0	0
7PLAN003W	Dissertation/Policy Implementation Project	Core	2	40	20
7PLAN050W	End Point Assessment Level 7	Core	2	0	0
7PLAN035W	Planning Research: Methods and Skills	Core	2	20	10
7PLAN048W	Professional Planning Practice Week 3	Core	2	0	0
7PLAN049W	Professional Planning Practice Week 4	Core	2	0	0
7PLAN019W	Sustainable Cities and Neighbourhoods	Core	2	20	10
7PLAN040W	Communities Towards Sustainability: Public Engagement	Option	2	20	10
7PLAN041W	Conservation and Heritage	Option	2	20	10
7PLAN033W	Emerging Landscapes and Urban Ecologies	Option	2	20	10
7PLAN029W	Environmental Policy, Assessment and Climate Change	Option	2	20	10
7HOUS002W	Housing and Urban Regeneration	Option	2	20	10
7TRAN036W	Information Management Applications for Urban Planning	Option	2	20	10
7TRAN013W	Land Use Planning and Transport	Option	2	20	10
7TRAN037W	Modifying Transport Behaviour: Theory, Practice and Politics	Option	2	20	10

Module Code	Module Title	Status	PT Year (where applicable)	UK credit	ECTS
7PLAN038W	Place and Experience in Design of Urban Spaces	Option	2	20	10
7PLAN010W	Planning for Urban Risk and Resilience	Option	2	20	10
7TRAN027W	Streets, Places and Active Transport	Option	2	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 register for your first choice of option 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, apprentices can become licentiates of the RTPI. After the completion of the course, the apprentices will need to spend the next year full time with the employer and mentor/sponsor agreeing case studies in order to complete the End Point Assessment where, if successful, apprentices will gain RTPI chartered status and complete the entire apprenticeship.

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 apprentices' main point of contact for all questions and concerns pertaining to the course but each apprentice 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.

The course is 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 apprentices.

Continuous monitoring and review of the apprentice 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 apprentices, external examiners and module pass rates. There are regular course team meetings throughout the academic year to which elected representatives are invited to put forward their views and discuss matters relating to the course.

Additionally, apprentices are supported in their workplace by the employer and a workplace based mentor who is a full member of the RTPI and meets regularly with the apprentice to discuss their skills, knowledge and experiences. The work based mentor will support the apprentice through the APC process and corroborate their learnt experience in the workplace as the apprentice progresses towards Chartered Town Planner status.

As part of the accreditation of the course with Ofsted, the university's apprenticeship team and a member from the academic staff will meet with the apprentice and employer every 12 weeks in the form of a tripartite meeting. The meetings will enable the monitoring of the apprentice as they progress through the course.

Academic regulations

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

Course specific regulations apply to some courses.

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 https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/when-you-arrive/blackboard

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.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students1 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 in 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 https://www.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 https://www.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. University Panels normally include internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university. a representative from industry and a Student Advisor.

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 the evidence of student surveys, student progression and achievement and reports from external examiners, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and make changes where necessary.

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.

- 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.

- Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.

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 they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification is supplemented by the Course Handbook, Module proforma and