

MSc Urban Planning and Development

Awarding Institution:
Teaching Institution:
Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences

The University of Reading
The University of Reading
Programme length: 12 months
(full-time) or 24 months (part-time)
Date of specification: August 2003
Town and Country Planning

For students entering in 2003
Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s):
Programme Director: A.J. Doak
Board of Studies: Postgraduate Courses in REP
Professional Accreditation: RTPI and RICS

Summary of programme aims

The aim of this degree is to prepare graduates for a career in town and country planning where they may be required to research and prepare policies and plans; negotiate and regulate development schemes; undertake community consultations; and present reports to committees and at public enquiries. The MSc/Dip in Urban Planning and Development constitutes the fourth year of a 3+1 programme that is embedded within the Planning and Development specialisation of the BSc in Land Management. The course can also be completed on a part-time (day release) basis over 24 months.

Transferable skills

The Royal Town Planning Institute and the Construction Industry Council have identified a number of generic transferable and intellectual skills that all students are expected to have developed by the end of their professionally accredited programme of study. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, team working, leadership and use of information technology.

The MSc Urban Planning and Development programme is designed to ensure that students progressively develop these transferable skills throughout their studies, in parallel, and integrated, with acquiring the specialist planning knowledge, understanding and skills. However, it should be recognised that many important skills areas have already been covered by students during their under-graduate studies, especially those relating to real estate development.

Programme structure and content

The MSc Urban Planning and Development is designed within a 200 credit modular structure with a combination of 10-credit and 20-credit modules and a 40-credit MSc Dissertation. This credit weighting reflects the current educational requirements of the Royal Town Planning Institute, which seeks to cover a wide range of knowledge areas, skill competencies and value perspectives over a minimum four-year period of (3+1) undergraduate and post-graduate study. This means that the credit weighting for both the MSc and Diploma courses in Urban Planning and Development are higher than the general University scheme and derogation has been approved.

The first part of the course lasts up to the Summer examination period and students are required to take modules in this period totalling 160 credits. Students are required to study three core modules during the first term; Planning for Places, Strategic Planning, Planning Projects 2 (Strategic) and students undertake their first of two 10-credit option modules (or a single 20-credit option). The Spring Term completes the taught elements with modules in Economic Development in Practice; Planning Methods; Environmental Policy and Politics; Research Methods; and the

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second 10-credit option module. The dissertation module runs throughout the year although students do not officially enrol on the MSc route-way until after the Summer Term exam period (where three more papers are sat). The European field week and associated group and comparative project work makes-up the European Planning module and the dissertations are prepared over the Summer vacation for September submission. Students undertaking the course part-time take the core modules (except the dissertation) during the first year of study and complete two options modules and the dissertation during their second year.

The table below sets out the full module list.

Mod Code	Module (Core Modules Shaded)	Credits	Level	Term
REMSPL	Strategic Planning	10	M	A
REMPFP	Planning for Places	20	M	A
REMPP2	Planning Projects 2 (Strategic)	20	M	A
REMEPP	Environmental Policy and Politics	20	M	S
ECMEDP	Economic Development in Practice	20	M	S
REMPLM	Planning Methods	10	M	S
REMF11	Research Methods	20	M	S
REMRGN	Regeneration	10	M	A
REMNRAR	Natural Resources and the British Planning System	10	M	A
ECMEUE	European Urban and Regional Economics	20	M	A/S
ECMIRM	International Real Estate Markets	20	M	S
REMCPP	Countryside Planning & Policy	10	M	S
REMPE	Property and Environment	10	M	S
REMPHT	Planning and High Technology	10	M	S
	Field Trip (First Week of Summer Term) Assessed in European Planning Module			
	Exams (Middle of Summer Term)			
REMEUP	European Planning	20	M	S
REMPD1	Dissertation 1 (12,000 words in length)	40	M	Summer
	Final Exam Board (Middle of Autumn Term)			

Progression requirements

Students must achieve a mark of 50% in each module of the course to be awarded the Masters Degree. Students will have the right to re-sit any module once, normally in early September after the June exam board. Students also have the right to resubmit a failed dissertation, normally within 12 months. Students are able to continue to work on their dissertation if they fail modules that require re-examination in the September.

The award of Post-Graduate Diploma will be dependent upon the successful completion of 140 credits at the same pass marks as for the Masters Degree. The Diploma will not require the completion of the Research Methods or Dissertation modules.

Summary of teaching and assessment

Teaching is organised in 20 or 10 credit modules each credit representing 10 hours of student effort. The relationship between class contact in the form of lecture, workshop, seminar, tutorial and student centred learning in the form of individual research and project/case study is varied across all modules and is set out in the individual module descriptors. All modules are designed to deliver M level outcomes, with students being able to understand the knowledge obtained and be critically aware of the theoretical and practical implications of the material. Students can choose at the beginning of the course or after the Summer examinations to either undertake the

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MSc routeway (with its Dissertation and supporting Research Methods modules) or progress to Diploma level, without these research-orientated components.

Students will be assessed by a range of methods including formal examination papers and individual and group assignments including applied problem solving, essays, literature reviews, reports, presentations and projects. Students will have the right to re-sit any module once. Normally examination and assignment re-sits will be in early September. Should it be necessary, dissertation re-submissions or deferrals will be within one year.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
<u>Failing categories:</u>	
40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degree

To pass the Masters, students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall in modules worth 200 credits. The Royal Town Planning Institute (which provides professional accreditation of the course) requires evidence of student competence across all areas of the taught programme and this means students are required to pass all modules. This is different from the general University classification scheme for taught masters, and derogation has been approved for this.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

For PG Diploma

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more in modules worth 140 credits. The Diploma will not require the completion of the Research Methods or Dissertation modules.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this course are required to have obtained an Honours degree in the under-graduate component of the programme.

Admissions Tutor: Joe Doak

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is

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provided by Year Tutors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

The Department's Resource Centre contains a variety of information sources relevant to Planning-related courses. It has a wide-ranging reference collection of textbooks, journals, property company reports and planning documents, which complements the material held in the Main University Library. The Resource Centre also holds the *Barbour Index* microfiche files for *Planning* and *Property Management*, and a link to the on-line *ACOMPLINE* database provided by the Greater London Authority's Research Library.

Career prospects

Our students have been regularly employed by local authorities, government agencies and the largest and most prestigious firms of planning and property consultants including: RPS; Terence O'Rourke; Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners; Arups; WS Atkins; DTZ Debenham Thorpe, Drivers Jonas, and CB Hillier Parker. Reading graduates have progressed to senior positions in these and other organisations both in the UK and around the world.

Additionally graduates have found employment with development companies (for example, Slough Estates, Countryside Properties, Berkeley Homes), voluntary sector organisations and the private corporate sector. Traditionally our students have had little difficulty in securing employment and, even during the recession, the vast majority of our graduates had secured employment or were undertaking further study within three months of the end of their programme.

Opportunities for study abroad

The intensive nature of the MSc programme is not ideally tailored to study abroad, although MSc students can undertake a SOCRATES-funded block of study during the latter part of the Summer Term and Summer Vacation linked to their dissertation work. There is also, of course, the compulsory attendance at the European Field Trip.

Educational aims of the programme

The MSc programme is a blend of academic rigour and applied practical analysis, which builds on their three years of under-graduate study in Land Management. The programme aims to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for successful careers in national and European planning and development agencies. It is accredited by the RTPI and also within the RTPI University/RICS partnership arrangement. The aims of the programme are to provide students with a structured but flexible learning framework and to ensure that the skill areas covered by the programme are applicable to a range of occupational and professional needs while relevant to other possible future career paths. The MSc routeway places some emphasis on the attainment of knowledge, skills and experiential learning in research. Although students on the Diploma are not expected to gain this depth, basic research skills and understanding of methods are covered.

Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge, understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding

<p>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the nature, purposes and methods of planning; 2. traditions of thought in philosophy, science and social science; 3. planning methods; 4. the roles and relationships of the planner; 5. inter-relationships between the social, economic, political and environmental processes and the natural and built environment; 6. the development process and the 'economic' valuation of land and property; 7. law, procedure, organization and governance of planning practice; 8. comparative understanding of planning law and practice; 9. related areas of policy; 10. Specialised, in-depth, study of planning intervention and development processes and how these interact with the characteristics and dynamics of markets, the environment and place 	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Acquisition of knowledge of fields 1 – 9 is promoted across the programme through lectures, tutorials, seminars, practicals, workshops, case studies, role-play exercises, IT-based exercises, site visits, field trips, guest lectures, other project-based assignments, and through individual consultation with academic staff and year tutors. Much of this material is covered in the undergraduate course in Land Management.</p> <p>The post-graduate MSc Year enables students to extend their understanding of the specialist area of study in field 10 utilising similar teaching and learning methods and strategies as above, but also through the preparation of a 12,000-word dissertation.</p> <p>Details of how these areas of knowledge are covered is provided in a supplementary paper to this specification (Appendix 1).</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Many of the Modules are assessed through a combination of assignment (in the forms identified earlier) and formal examination. All the others (except Strategic Planning, which is assessed through a formal examination) are assessed through coursework assignments.</p>
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Skills and other attributes

<p>B. Intellectual skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. define problems; 2. collect and investigate data, & undertake research; 3. undertake quantitative & qualitative analysis and appraisal; 4. assess aesthetic & design quality; 5. postulate & evaluate alternative futures; 6. weigh evidence, solve problems & make decisions. 	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Practical projects, seminars, case studies and other exercises are the main but not the sole mechanisms for developing skills on the course. Appendix 1 lists those modules most relevant to specific skill areas. The skills areas are those specified in the current RTPI Educational Guidelines (RTPI, 2001) and those produced for the Construction Industry Council's 'Common Learning Outcomes' (CIC, 1997).</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Intellectual skills are assessed through a wide variety of approaches including essays, unseen examination papers, open book examinations, group projects, specialist exercises, presentations, tutorial & seminar papers, and reports.</p>
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C. Practical skills – able to:

1. work collaboratively in a (multidisciplinary) group;
2. produce strategies, policies and plans;
3. manage change in the environment; and
4. communicate spatial and related planning information.



Teaching/learning methods and strategies

See Appendix 1.

Assessment

Skills 1 – 4 are primarily assessed through coursework, in the form of project submissions and final reports and through presentations. Skills 2, 3 and 4 are also assessed through unseen written examinations.

D. Transferable skills – able to:

1. manage projects & resources;
2. manage people and provide leadership;
3. undertake creative thinking;
4. work with flexibility and adaptability;
5. communicate using written, oral, graphic media;
6. use information technology



Teaching/learning methods and strategies

See Appendix 1.

Assessment

Skills 1 – 4 are primarily assessed through coursework, in the form of project submissions and final reports and through presentations. Skills 3 and 5 are also assessed through unseen written examinations.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the study module guides and programme handbook.