

CORPORATE AND ACADEMIC SERVICES

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Part 1: Basic Data						
Awarding Institution	University of the West of England, Bristol					
Teaching Institution	The Open University, University of Dundee, Leeds Beckett University (formerly Leeds Metropolitan University), London South Bank University (The 'Joint Distance Learning Consortium (JDLC)'					
Delivery Location	Distance Learning, via Blackboard. Hosted by UWE					
Faculty responsible for programme	Faculty of Environment and Technology					
Department responsible for programme	Department of Geography and Environmental Management					
Modular Scheme Title	N/A					
Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body Links	Royal Town Planning Institute – Accrediting professional body (RTPI)					
Highest Award Title	MSc Urban and Rural Planning					
Default Award Title	MSc Urban and Rural Planning					
Fall-back Award Title	None					
Interim Award Titles	Post Graduate Certificate Urban and Rural Planning Post graduate Diploma Urban and Rural Planning					
UWE Progression Route	N/A					
Mode(s) of Delivery	Distance Learning					
Codes	UCAS: JACS:					
Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements	ISIS2: HESA:					
CAP Approval Date	18 November 2014					
Valid from	January 2015 (Programme runs on a calendar year model)					
Valid until Date						
	January 2021					
Version	1					

Part 2: Educational Aims of the Programme

The Joint Distance Learning Consortium (JDLC) MSc Urban and Rural Planning provides an education and, potentially, routeway to become a chartered town planner through distance learning. It is suitable for students anywhere in the world who do not want, or are not able, to complete a part-time or full-time college-based course. The entry requirements include an option for students to study with the Open University students prior to joining the full MSc programme. This means students are able to ultimately access the programme irrespective of their backgrounds at the point of initial contact, making this a truly accessible programme.

The JDLC guiding principle is:

"Access for all to a quality spatial planning education".

The programme is accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and is a unique programme by virtue of the partnership approach and delivery model. The MSc Urban and Rural Planning follows a calendar year, with each course starting in January and concluding in November.

The JDLC has been running since 1985 and is managed and delivered by UWE, Bristol in partnership with the University of Dundee, London South Bank University and Leeds Beckett University), together with the Open University.

Successful completion of the programme leads to a Royal Town Planning Institute recognised MSc in Urban and Rural Planning, awarded by the University of the West of England, Bristol. Completion of a structured programme of planning experience followed by the RTPI's Assessment of Professional Competence leads to full RTPI membership. The programme includes two exit points; a PGCert after year 1 (60 credits) and a PGDip after year 2 (120 credits).

The JDLC MSc Urban and Rural Planning represents a unique approach to professional planning education. It offers flexibility in terms of how and when students study and at which pace, as well as some choice over the subjects included. It provides ICT based support to studies.

Although principally designed as a route to the planning profession and the professional qualification of the Royal Town Planning Institute, the programme will also be of interest to others wishing to know more about the planning system for reasons other than professional qualification or a desire to be a town planner. The programme prepares students for work as planners in a wide range of jobs including in local or central government, private practice, and the third sector. Graduates are also equipped to work outside the UK through the acquisition of international knowledge and skills. The programme is intended to be an international offer and the content and assessment models ensure relevance, validity and applicability anywhere in the world.

The JDLC MSc Urban and Rural Planning, taken together with a minimum of two years structured and mentored relevant experience and the RTPI's Assessment of Professional Competence, can provide the basis for election to Membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute, which carries with it the right to use the designation MRTPI and the title 'Chartered Town Planner'.

Part 2: Educational Aims of the Programme

The programme aims:

- 1. To provide a coherent programme of advanced postgraduate study in urban and rural planning, which is firmly underpinned by a wide range of research (including that carried out by staff in all partner universities who teach on the programme) and by Faculty scholarship, consultancy, and links with practice;
- 2. Drawing upon an inspirational programme of learning strongly linked to practice, to enable students from a range of disciplines and backgrounds to become effective, professionally-qualified planners;
- 3. To offer a flexible learning environment through effective ICT supported online distance learning, and the ability to take periods of 'time out' (in accordance with UWE regulations; 2 years of 'time out' are possible during the period of study), etc.);
- 4. To ensure the management of the programme is sensitive and responsive to the study needs of a range of individuals, including mature students in employment;
- 5. To provide an opportunity for students to study one of a range of specialised areas of planning, within a course built around core planning knowledge and skills; and
- 6. To encourage students to develop the capacity for advanced thought and action that is independent, critical, reflective and applicable in a range of international contexts.

Programme requirements for the purposes of the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR)

The MSc Urban and Rural Planning programme will adopt HEAR in line with the UWE PG schedule.

The JDLC MSc Urban and Rural Planning HEAR will summarise student achievements and help them to:

- Provide employers with an official record of their accomplishments verified by the University
- Plan and prepare for their future career
- Prepare their CV and job applications

The report is an official document verified by the University which can be shared with employers. In addition to comprehensive details on grades, the HEAR will provide an effective insight and understanding into attributes and capabilities gained by students during their time studying the MSc Urban and Rural Planning.

The JDLC MSc Urban and Rural Planning HEAR will include a description of the course content, the degree classification, list of all module results, and a completed list of UWE verified extra-curricular activities. All final marks will be on the HEAR post publication date.

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

RTPI – Royal Town Planning Institute LO – Learning Outcome I – Introduced C – Consolidated A - Assessed

(RTPI) Learning Outcomes:	Contexts and Law	Local Planning	Urban and sustainable design principles	Strategic planning	International Planning	Implementation and management	Research techniques	Integrated Planning project	Dissertation (Focus specific)	OU Specialism (module specific)
A) Knowledge and understanding of:		L	L	i	<u>i</u>	L	<u>.</u>	1	.L	
(A1) Explain and demonstrate how spatial planning operates within the context of institutional and legal frameworks.	ICA	ICA		ICA	ICA			CA	CA	CA
(A4) Demonstrate how efficient resource management helps to deliver effective spatial planning.	I			С	ICA	CA		CA	CA	CA
(A5) Explain the political and ethical nature of spatial planning and reflect on how planners work effectively within democratic decision-making structures.	ICA	ICA		ICA	ICA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA
(A6) Explain the contribution that planning can make to the built and natural environment and in particular recognise the implications of climate change.	I		ICA	С			CA	CA	CA	CA
(A9) 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.		ICA		CA		CA		CA	CA	CA
(B) Intellectual Skills		4	4	4		A	£			
(A2) Generate integrated and well substantiated responses to spatial planning challenges		ICA	CA	CA			Х	CA	CA	CA
(A3) 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.		ICA		ICA	ICA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA
(A7) Debate the concept of rights and the legal and practical implications of representing these rights in planning decision making process.	ICA	ICA				CA		CA	CA	CA
(A8) Evaluate different development strategies and the practical application of development finance; assess the implications for generating added value for the community.	I	I	ICA			CA		CA	CA	CA
(A10)Evaluate the principles and processes of design for creating high quality places and enhancing the public realm for the benefit of all in society.			ICA					CA	CA	CA
(C) Subject/Professional/Practical Skills					1					
(A12) Recognise the role of communication skills in the planning process and the importance of working in an interdisciplinary context, and be able to demonstrate negotiation, mediation, advocacy and leadership skills.	IA	ICA	ICA	ICA		CA		CA	CA	CA
(A13) 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	IA					CA		CA	CA	CA

maintain and develop professional competence.		[]								
(D) Transferable skills and other attributes (A11) Demonstrate effective research, analytical, evaluative and appraisal skills and the ability to reach appropriate, evidence based decisions.	ICA	ICA	ICA	ICA	ICA C	CA C	A	CA	CA	CA
In addition to contributing towards th Objectives, the programme will also pr the RTPI Specialism Learning Outcome RTPI – Royal Town Planning Institute LO – Learning Outcome I – Introduced C – Consolidated A - Assessed	ovide									
	and Law	nning	Urban and sustainable design principles	planning	International Planning	Implementation and management	Research techniques	Integrated Planning project	Dissertation (Focus specific)	OU Specialism (module specific)
(RTPI) Specialist Learning Outcomes:	Contexts and Law	Local Planning	Urban and sustai design principles	Strategic planning	Internatio	Implementatic management	Research	Integrated project	Dissertati specific)	OU Speci specific)
 Engage in theoretical, practical and ethical debate at the forefront of the area of the specialism in the context of spatial planning. 	I	I	I	I	I	1		CA	CA	CA
 Evaluate the social, economic, environmental and political context for the area of specialism. 	I	I	I	I	I	I		CA	CA	CA
 Evaluate the distinctive contribution of the specialism to the making of place and the mediation of space. 		I	I	I	I			CA	CA	CA
 Demonstrate the relationship within a spatial planning context of the particular area of specialism o other specialist areas of expertise. 		I		I	I	I		CA	CA	CA
5. 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	I	I	I	I	I	I	CA	CA	CA
6. Assess the contribution of the specialism to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.		I	I					CA	CA	CA
Part 4: Student Learning and Studen Teaching and learning strategies			learr	ning	outcor	mes t	o be	e ach	ieved	and

The Department of Geography and Environmental Management offers programmes with a wellestablished track record of success in teaching and research in planning.

While students are offered support through the teaching and learning strategies of individual module leaders, the programme also provides direct support to students through the programme leader through physical contact or a range of ICT options.

Employment opportunities

Student employment prospects are excellent since the job market for urban planners in both the

private and public sectors is improving, and with graduates emerging from a well respected course and department. This enables many students to find employment before or as soon as they have completed their studies. Throughout their studies, student have access to the careers services of each of the partner universities. Further to this, free student membership of the RTPI from year 1 of study means that students have access to the support of their professional body in their development and preparations to join the profession, or progress within it for those already working in planning.

Field trips and exchange opportunities

Field trips are an optional part of the programme and will be hosted/run by each study centre in rotation.

The field trips will be open all three year groups and will give students the opportunity to development their skills, knowledge and understanding in a way that is appropriate to their position in the programme.

Description of any Distinctive Features

This course presents a unique approach to professional planning education. Course materials are delivered entirely over the internet through a virtual learning environmental (Blackboard). It offers flexibility in terms of how and when study is undertaken and at what pace, as well as some choice over the subjects included. Blackboard is also used for announcements, messages and links to other published resources, as well as links to support services. The electronic course materials, together with supplementary resources, are self-contained. The online content is interactive, utilising a range of software and delivery techniques. Learning is entirely through online self-directed study, with full remote library and student support services provided by UWE and FET. Assessment is submitted electronically in various forms, including recorded presentations and electronic portfolios in addition to the traditional reports and essays.

In addition to being hosted and supported remotely by UWE, on enrolling upon the course, student have access to all of the resources of the four planning school, including libraries and tutorial support.

The first two years of study consist of a series of modules which allow the students to develop a comprehensive understanding of urban and rural planning encompassing urban design, plan making and policy, Contexts and Law, planning and place histories, the development process, finance, implementation and delivery, stakeholder participation and politics, and ICT. The third year of study allows students to specialise in an area of personal interest through a selected Open University delivered options module, and the UWE dissertation module.

For those who pursue Open University (OU) study prior to joining the core MSc programme, the OU courses fulfil the important functions of introducing students with limited experience in higher education to study at this level, as well as to study by distance learning.

Years 1 and 2 are each equivalent in workload to a 'full 60 credit' course. The 60 credits in year 3 are made up by a 30-credit Dissertation and the 30-credit OU option module. Each year is studied in sequence, building progressively on material already covered and increasing in academic difficulty.

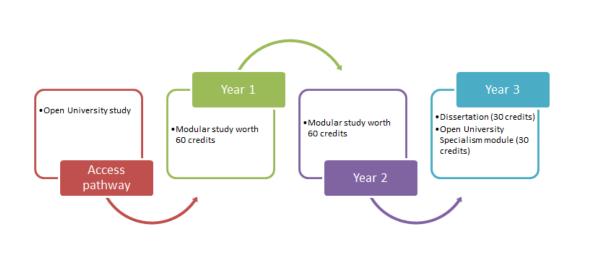
The course takes approximately 3 years to study, which is longer than a part-time programme which would typically take 2-2.5 years; however, the JDL is specifically designed to be manageable above

and beyond a full work and/or family life. The programme is therefore manageable for students in most personal and professional circumstances.

There are 4 modules units of study in each of years 1 and 2. Students are expected to spend around 15 hours, per week studying, giving a total study time of 600 hours per year. It should be noted that this will include time spent working on the coursework and directed self-study. There is considerable diversity in subject matter within each course reflecting the range of material necessary to be covered in a recognised urban and rural planning course.

A student's own personal pathway will be dependent upon whether they require Open University study prior to commencing with the MSc. The 'Entry Requirements' section of this specification details the Open University routeway onto this programme.

The basic programme model is as follows:



Note: OU Courses need to be chosen from a list of 'approved' courses

People have varied backgrounds. Some of these would often exclude study for a post-graduate level qualification. The JDLC MSc is specifically designed to be an open access course. This means that whatever the background, there will be a personal pathway that can be followed to secure an MSc Urban and Rural Planning.

For a non-graduate to join the programme an evaluation will be made of their professional practice experience and any non-degree level qualifications, such as a HE Diploma. Where a student does not have a background to allow for direct entry, it will be required to pursue some study with the Open University before actually starting on the JDLC MSc. This will consist of up to 240 credits chosen from an approved list, with the number of credits depending upon academic and professional background. If all 240 credits are required, a student will study a foundation level module followed by some second and third level modules. The student will chose these from the list of JDL consortium approved modules. Some qualifications and experience will enable some of these 240 credits to be accepted as 'accredited learning'. An alternative to this 'pick and mix' model is for the student to study the Open University Diploma of Higher Education in Environmental Studies where the full 240 credits are required.

Non-graduates may not progress onto years 2 and 3 of the MSc before they have obtained their necessary OU courses, but it is possible to overlap completion of OU study with year 1 of the MSc. Total study duration, including OU study, will range from 4 to 7 years in total for a non-graduate.

Year emphasis:

Year 1 - focuses on contexts, principles and procedures and covers the practices by which planning seeks to manage the built and natural environment. The year includes consideration of the history of regulatory approaches to managing development, planning law, local and community planning, strategic planning and infrastructure delivery, and the fundamentals of urban design.

Year 2 - further develops learning from the first year, including spatial planning approaches and the mechanisms, methods, processes and objectives of planning approaches. Strategic planning and major infrastructure are key elements of this year, as are plan making and a consideration of the process of development and the actors who participate within it. This year also considers theories and discourses concerning implementation, delivery, and management.

Year 3 - seeks to provide a specialist focus on ideas, perspectives and debates that set the context for planning and enable students to develop a substantial and genuine expertise in a specific field, which they may pursue throughout their careers through future programmes of life long learning. The main mechanism for this is the production of a 12,000 word dissertation; it is also informed through the selection of an OU Masters level module. This year is extremely flexible, allowing a student to study in considerable depth and area of interest that of particular concern or helpful to career aspirations.

Across all years, planning skills are embedded.

Part 5: Assessment

A: Approved to University Regulations and Procedures

Assessment Strategy and Map

The programme encompasses a range of assessment methods including; essays, virtual presentations, design projects, reports, portfolio submissions and photographic essays.

The assessment rationale is based upon providing a diverse range of assessment types to ensure that the programme is effectively supporting the development of knowledge, understanding, generic skills and professional skills. Being mindful of the DL delivery model employed, a diversity of approaches and innovates in form is essential. Through traditional and non-traditional assessment (PowerPoint presentations with embedded audio files for example), the programme is

able to meet the learning outcomes and ambitions of the programme. Each individual module specification details the assessment form to be employed.

The assessment approach is detailed in the following assessment map:

Type of Assessment* Practical Skills Assessment Exam Oral assessment and/or presentation Unseen Written Exam In-class Written Test Open Book Written Written Assignment Practical Exam Report / Project Dissertation Portfolio Context and Law B1 A1 Local planning Compulsory A1 Modules Strategic Planning B1 A1 Level 1 Urban and sustainable design A1 A1 principles International Planning A1 Implementation and Delivery Compulsory A1 B1 Modules Integrated Planning Project A1 A1 Level 2 Research techniques A1 A1 A1 Compulsory A2 Dissertation Modules Year 3 A1 Optional OU Specialism options Modules Level 3

Assessment Map for MSc Urban and Rural Planning

Part 6: Programme Structure

This structure diagram demonstrates the student journey from Entry through to Graduation for a typical student

ENTRY		Compulsory Modules	Optional Modules	Interim Awards
		UBGMP6-15-M Context and Law		
	r 1	UBGMPM-15-M Local Planning	None	PGCert Urban and Rural Planning
	Year 1	UBGMQ6-15-M Strategic Planning		
		UBGMQM-15-M Urban and Sustainable Design Principles		
		Compulsory Modules	Optional Modules	Interim Awards
	Year 2	UBGMR6-15-M International Planning UBGMRM-15-M Implementation and Delivery	None	PGDip Urban and Rural
		UBGMS6-15-M Integrated Planning Project		Planning

		UBGMSM-15-M Research Techniques		
		Compulsory Modules	Optional Modules	Interim Awards
		UBGMT6-30-M		
Year 3		Dissertation		MSc Urban and Rural Planning
	Y	UBGMTM-30-M		
		Open University Specialism module		

In the final year, students will be able to select a 30 credit module from a range of Open University module options From their module selection, students will be able to identify a specialism (when combined with their dissertation) from the following: Environmental policy'; 'Management, decision making and leadership'; and 'Social policy'. See the **Programme Guide** for full details of the specialism model and OU module options: https://share.uwe.ac.uk/sites/fet/scheme/ProgrammeHandbooks/Forms/Overview.aspx .

Part 7: Entry Requirements

The following entry routeways exist for the MSc Urban and Rural Planning:

- Cognate degree 2.2 or higher (Geography, Architecture, Surveying, Environmental Science etc)
- Non-cognate degree 2.2 or higher PLUS at least one year of professional planning-related work experience
- OU Diploma of Higher Education in Environmental Studies: <u>http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/qualifications/w46</u>
- Non-cognate degree 2.2 or higher PLUS up to 240 approved credits from Open University (See Supplementary Document 2: Entry arrangements for full details of the entry model and OU module options)

Part 8: Reference Points and Benchmarks

UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development

This programme has been revised with an awareness of the educational context, issues and challenges as presented by UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development. As an innovative, partnership delivered, internationally orientated programme that is delivered through distance learning, allowing for a comparable study experience for students based anywhere in the world, it is considered that this programme is well placed to support learning and knowledge enhancement in education for sustainable development. Sustainable development represents a golden thread of content and context which runs throughout the three years of study.

UWE 2020 Strategy

The programme will contribute to the UWE 2020 strategy in the following manner:

UWE 2020 Ambition: to be known nationally and internationally as the best university for:

 Professionally recognised and practice-oriented programmes, which contribute to an outstanding learning experience and generate excellent graduate employment opportunities and outcomes for all students.

The JDLC MSc Urban and Rural Planning is a fully accredited RTPI planning programme which is orientated towards the planning profession and other aligned built and natural environment roles. The programme will continue to offer an innovative learning experience and support graduates moving into the profession, or develop within it for those already in work.

• Connecting and working with our local and regional economy, businesses and communities and international partners to advance knowledge, and to advance the health, sustainability and prosperity of our locality and region.

This programme is an national partnership programme with 4 UK partners. Each institution has relationships with their local area which this programme is able to draw upon for case studies, field trips, module content and student experience. The programme is a truly international offering and presents opportunities for EU and international development

• Being digitally advanced, agile and responsive in the way we work, embracing and leading change to create new sustainable opportunities.

This programme is arguably a world leader by offering an innovative distance learning course which is supported by 5 universities and which leads to a professionally accredited Award. The programme is entirely online, offering a digitally advanced and agile learning environment for students which is responsive to teaching, learning and professional practice demands

• Being inclusive and global in outlook and approach.

The programme is designed to allow students to study remotely from anywhere in the world. This programme is truly inclusive and global in outlook and approach.

Part 8: Reference Points and Benchmarks

UWE 2020 priorities:

 Outstanding learning: All our students experiencing engaging and outstanding learning, teaching and support services throughout their student journey, fully utilising advances in technology to support their academic, professional and social growth and development.

This programme provides all content through online delivery. In addition, students are able to access support remotely through online, interactive, virtual, telephone, email, and Skype ICT solutions, providing academic, library, student, SAT and administrative support for all, anywhere in the world.

• Ready and able graduates: Graduates ready and able to realise their full potential, make a positive contribution to society and their chosen field of employment or further study and play their full part in the development of a sustainable global society and knowledge economy.

Graduates from this programme are in a position to pursue a new career in planning or advance within the profession in circumstances where they are already in work. The programme is fully accredited and, in partnership with the RTPI and UWE Bristol, students are able to develop and realize their potential.

 Research with impact: World-class performance in selected areas of research that meets the needs of our community, a sustainable economy and society and feeds the scholarship and enquiry that underpins our learning and teaching.

All staff on this programme are research active and many are internationally known in their field. Academics supporting this programme work in 5 different universities and students are able to draw upon the research excellence, staff knowledge, and teaching and learning abilities within each. Research is both academic and practice based, ensuring broad and effective impact.

• Strategic partnerships, connections and networks: That differentiate our academic activity and enhance the global reputation, health, sustainability and prosperity of the University, Bristol and its city-region.

This programme is a partnership with 4 other universities and is delivered with the support of the RTPI. This programme is the only one of its type in the world, making it a truly unique and internationally distinct partnership programme.

Quality Assurance Agency

The programme is designed to be consistent with the qualifications descriptors set out in the National Qualification Framework (August 2008) issued by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Reference has also been made to the subject benchmark statements for 'town and country planning' (2008).

The JDLC and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)

The programme is accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and satisfies the learning outcomes that have been set for the 'spatial' and 'specialist' requirements of an RTPI

Part 8: Reference Points and Benchmarks

accredited degree (as published in January 2011).. Particular regard has been had to the institute's statement on initial planning education, which was published in 2004 (Revised 2012: <u>http://rtpi.org.uk/media/8479/microsoft_word_-</u>

policy statement on initial planning education 2012.pdf), as well as the RTPI's corporate strategy for the period between 2010 and 2014 as well as the recently produced manifesto 'Shaping the Future' (June 2010).

The department and the JDLC have strong links with the RTPI, both nationally and across the regions, and provides an input into the shaping and making of policy and initiatives across the institute.

Staff research and consultancy interests and expertise

The Department of Geography and Environmental Management has a strong research base, with a strong relationship with a number of research centres within FET. These include the Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments and the Centre for Transport and Society. Members of staff from these groups are actively involved with the delivery of the programme and regularly attend conferences and produce articles for publication in their respective field. The departments in the partner universities are similarly research active and the JDLC staff team are all research active and, in many cases, internationally recognized within their field.

Employer feedback

The department has a long and established track record in delivering planning education at postgraduate levels. The quality of our offer is acknowledged by employers, and excellent links are maintained with practice both locally and across the country. Many of these organisations help with the activities of the university, including giving advice to a joint employer/university forum, lectures, projects and in the operation of the year three placement. The MSc is well placed to compete both nationally and internationally, and employers have indicated this in direct feedback.

The programme staff have consulted widely on the changes to the programme including with existing and former students. The refreshed programme therefore reflects opinion about content, material and assessment, as well as broader issues of employability and continuing education.

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected 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 individual modules can be found in module specifications, available on the <u>University's website</u>.