



Module Specification

City Lab: Strategic Planning Skills

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Part 1: Information

Module title: City Lab: Strategic Planning Skills

Module code: UBLLBY-15-3

Level: Level 6

For implementation from: 2027-28

UWE credit rating: 15

ECTS credit rating: 7.5

College: College of Arts, Technology and Environment

School: CATE School of Architecture and Environment

Partner institutions: None

Field: Architecture and the Built Environment

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: This module introduces students to the strategic dimensions of urban planning, including spatial development, infrastructure coordination, and the delivery of major growth. It also equips students with digital communication skills essential for public engagement, including interactive mapping, digital storytelling, and critical analysis of online planning discourse. While grounded in UK planning systems, the module draws on international examples to broaden students' strategic awareness.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: This module introduces students to the strategic aspects of urban planning, focusing on spatial development and infrastructure coordination. It encourages students to think beyond local contexts by examining planning at broader scales, including regional frameworks, spatial strategies, and major infrastructure initiatives. Through case studies and applied exercises, students begin to develop core competencies in strategic thinking, governance, and leadership, aligned with RTP1 expectations. The module prepares students to engage with complex planning challenges and contribute to forward-looking, sustainable spatial planning in their future careers.

Outline syllabus: An outline of the syllabus is below:

Introduction to Strategic Planning - Terminology, key concepts, and contemporary debates

Population & Economic Projections - Role of forecasting in shaping strategic growth

Strategic Growth Priorities - Sub-regional, regional, and national planning frameworks

Housing Delivery & Spatial Options - Appraising growth locations and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Stakeholders in Strategic Planning - Roles, interests, and governance dynamics

Infrastructure: Definitions & Needs - Contextualising infrastructure investment across scales

Infrastructure Planning Systems - Focus on NSIPs, planning challenges, and democratic debates

International Perspectives - Comparative strategic planning practices from abroad

Digital Mapping for Consultation - Creating interactive maps to explain planning proposals

Digital Storytelling in Planning - Communicating complex planning ideas to public audiences

Online Engagement & Misinformation - Evaluating platforms, monitoring sentiment, and addressing misinformation

Synthesis & Reflection - Linking strategic planning and digital engagement; student presentations

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: One-hour lecture per week, delivered by the module team and guest speakers from planning practice, infrastructure agencies, and digital engagement specialists. These sessions provide students with a detailed understanding of strategic planning processes, infrastructure delivery, and the practical challenges of communicating planning proposals to diverse audiences.

Two-hour tutorial per week, focused on developing students' strategic thinking, project coordination, and digital communication skills. Tutorials involve teamwork and hands-on exploration of weekly topics, including spatial strategy development, stakeholder engagement, and the use of digital tools for consultation and storytelling.

Project-based learning underpins the module, offering a student-centred approach that mirrors professional planning practice. Students work collaboratively to manage time and resources, respond to real-world planning challenges, and deliver small-scale strategic planning proposals supported by digital engagement strategies.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Apply strategic planning principles to spatial development and infrastructure coordination, demonstrating an understanding of planning at different scales and across governance contexts, while developing professional awareness of how strategic decisions are shaped in public, private, and third-sector roles.

MO2 Critically assess strategic planning frameworks, including nationally significant infrastructure projects, and evaluate their role in shaping long-term spatial outcomes, fostering the analytical skills required for professional judgement and policy engagement.

MO3 Design and communicate planning proposals using interactive mapping and digital storytelling tools and building confidence in public-facing communication and digital competencies essential for contemporary planning practice.

Hours to be allocated: 150

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 114 hours

Face-to-face learning = 36 hours

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/EEF165A1-F9B6-ED3C-F947-B7EE5C315B8B.html?lang=en-GB&login=1) via the following link <https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/EEF165A1-F9B6-ED3C-F947-B7EE5C315B8B.html?lang=en-GB&login=1>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: The summative assessment is in the form of a Portfolio that consists of two tasks

Strategic Planning task (1500 words): Analysis of a regional growth strategy or infrastructure project

Digital Engagement task: Interactive map, digital story, and/or critical reflection on public-facing communication using a digital tool.

Rationale for Coursework:

This Portfolio-based assessment is designed to develop and evaluate students' ability to critically engage with contemporary urban and regional planning challenges through both analytical and creative lenses. By combining strategic analysis with digital communication, the brief reflects the interdisciplinary nature of planning practice and the evolving demands placed on professionals in the field.

Strategic Planning Task (1500 words)

The first component of the Portfolio invites students to conduct a rigorous analysis of a regional growth strategy or infrastructure project. This task encourages:

Critical thinking and policy evaluation: Students will assess the rationale, objectives, and outcomes of a real-world planning initiative, considering its spatial, economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

Application of planning theory: The task bridges academic frameworks with practical

implementation, fostering an understanding of how strategic planning operates within complex governance structures.

Evidence-based argumentation: Students will be expected to use data, policy documents, and stakeholder perspectives to support their analysis, cultivating research and synthesis skills essential for planning professionals.

Digital Engagement Task

The second component focuses on public-facing communication through digital tools, such as interactive maps, digital storytelling, or reflective commentary on engagement strategies. This task aims to:

Enhance digital literacy: Students will explore how digital platforms can be used to communicate planning ideas, engage communities, and visualize spatial data.

Foster creativity and accessibility: By designing interactive or narrative outputs, students will consider how to make complex planning concepts understandable and compelling to non-specialist audiences.

Reflect on ethical and inclusive engagement: The task encourages students to critically assess the role of digital tools in shaping public discourse, participation, and transparency in planning processes.

Resit brief is the same as that as the first sit.

Formative feedback takes place during the module and considers the development of the professional planner and nurtures a critical and reflective mindset.

Formative feedback will consist of:

Discussion between peers within the lectures, tutorials and other scheduled sessions

Comments on coursework drafts by the teaching team

Use of interactive online tools (e.g. Menti) for students to post ideas/questions relating to taught content/coursework

Use of marking rubric both at the start to manage expectations of what 'good' looks like as well as facilitating students to use the rubric to evaluate their own drafts

Assessment tasks:

Portfolio (First Sit)

Description: A Portfolio that consists of two tasks

- Strategic Planning task (1500 words) Analysis of a regional growth strategy or infrastructure project
- Digital Engagement task : Interactive map, digital story, and/or critical reflection on public-facing communication using a digital tool.

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3

Portfolio (Resit)

Description: A Portfolio that consists of two tasks

- Strategic Planning task (1500 words) Analysis of a regional growth strategy or infrastructure project
- Digital Engagement task : Interactive map, digital story, and/or critical reflection on public-facing communication using a digital tool.

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Urban Planning Practice {Apprenticeship-UWE} [Frenchay] CertHE 2026-27