Module Specification

Project Viability and Risk Management

Version: 2026-27, v1.0, Approved

Contents

Part 1: Information

Module title: Project Viability and Risk Management

Module code: UBLLC7-30-M

Level: Level 7

For implementation from: 2026-27

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

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: Yes

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: This module equips students with the analytical tools and strategic insights needed to evaluate the viability of urban development projects in complex planning environments.

Through a multidisciplinary lens, students explore how market forces, social constraints, governance structures, and legal frameworks shape development outcomes. Emphasis is placed on integrating spatial and transport planning,

identifying and mitigating risks, and formulating quantitative evidence-based recommendations that support sustainable urban growth.

By the end of the module, students will be able to critically assess feasibility, conduct risk and uncertainty analysis, and communicate robust planning proposals with confidence and clarity.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: Key aims are as below:

To develop a critical understanding of what constitutes an economically efficient social use of capital influencing the economic and financial viability of urban development projects, including market dynamics, funding mechanisms, appraisal methodologies, and risk assessment strategies, etc.;

To explore the interrelationship between spatial and transport planning, equipping students to evaluate movement strategies and their impacts on project development feasibility;

To critically examine the framework for the decision-making process regarding strategic planning consultancy through identifying, assessing, and managing project risks in aspects of legal, political, and environmental uncertainties, with a focus on resilience and stakeholder engagement;

To foster the ability to synthesise multidisciplinary evidence and apply critical thinking, particularly in evaluating planning policies, governance structures, and their influence on project delivery;

To cultivate professional communication skills, empowering students to formulate and present robust, evidence-based recommendations for viable and context-sensitive urban development proposals.

Outline syllabus: Foundations of Urban Development Viability

Introduction to project feasibility in planning contexts

Market analysis techniques and development economics

Cost-benefit evaluation frameworks

Funding models and investment appraisal

Integration of spatial and transport planning approaches

Movement, Mobility, and Planning Integration

Principles of transport planning and its role in development

Evaluating movement strategies within spatial plans

Case studies on transport-led development

Tools for assessing accessibility and connectivity

Risk Identification and Mitigation Strategies

Legal, political, and environmental risks in planning

Stakeholder analysis and conflict resolution

Sustainability and resilience in risk management

Scenario planning and contingency frameworks

Governance, Policy, and Delivery Mechanisms

Planning policy analysis and interpretation

Governance structures and institutional roles

Barriers to project delivery and implementation

Critical thinking in evaluating policy impacts

Evidence-Based Planning and Communication

Data sources and evidence synthesis for planning proposals

Argumentation and professional communication skills

Preparing development briefs and viability reports

Peer review and presentation of proposals

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: This module is specific to Distance Learning students. All teaching and learning materials will be enabled through the use of appropriate software to create a quality student experience and ensure the delivery

of module learning objectives.

Pre-recorded lectures will be supplemented by virtual/independent site study, discussion exercises, and supported activities.

Independent learning includes academic, practice and wider reading, assignment preparation and completion, site visits (actual or virtual, independent experiences), desktop research, and reflection.

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

MO1 To develop a critical understanding of what constitutes an economically efficient social use of capital influencing the economic and financial viability of urban development projects, including market dynamics, funding mechanisms, and appraisal methodologies.

MO2 Identify potential risks in development projects—including legal, political, and environmental uncertainties—and propose mitigation strategies that reflect competencies in legal frameworks and sustainability.

MO3 Apply critical thinking to assess the impact of planning policies and governance structures on project delivery

MO4 Formulate and communicate robust, evidence-based recommendations for viable and resilient urban development proposals.

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

E-learning/online learning = 72 hours

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at readinglists.uwe.ac.uk via the following link https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/0862A049-BA10-1E01-3B02-3405C7F4253B.html?lang=en-GB&login=1

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: The summative assessment is set out as below:

Task 1: Policy Impact Critique Paper (1,500 words; 25% weighting)

This assignment asks students to critically evaluate the impacts of planning policies and governance structures on a selected development project. It builds students' capacity for critical thinking, policy analysis, and strategic planning. It mirrors the kind of evaluative work expected in both public and private sector planning roles.

Rationale: Task 1

This task is designed to cultivate students' analytical and evaluative skills by engaging them in a critical examination of how planning policies and governance frameworks shape real-world development outcomes.

Critical Thinking Development - Students must interrogate policy intentions versus actual impacts, fostering deeper understanding of planning theory and practice.

Policy Literacy - By dissecting governance structures, students gain insight into institutional dynamics, regulatory mechanisms, and stakeholder influence.

Strategic Insight - Evaluating a specific development project allows students to connect abstract policy frameworks to tangible spatial outcomes.

Professional Relevance - Mirrors the kind of policy review and impact assessment work carried out in planning departments, consultancies, and NGOs.

Task 2: Feasibility report with integrated transport analysis (3,000 words; 75% weighting)

Students will produce a professional feasibility report for a proposed urban development site. The report must evaluate the economic and financial viability of the proposed project, incorporating market analysis, funding strategies, methodological evaluation, and risk management strategies. A key requirement is the integration of transport planning considerations—such as accessibility, connectivity, and modal integration—into the overall viability assessment.

This assessment simulates real-world planning consultancy work, encouraging students to balance economic rationale with spatial and transport planning principles. It also develops students' abilities to communicate complex ideas in a structured and persuasive format, and to develop a comprehensive risk management strategy addressing legal, political, and environmental uncertainties.

Rationale for Task 2:

This task immerses students in the multifaceted process of evaluating the viability of an urban development proposal, with a strong emphasis on transport integration and risk management.

Real-World Simulation - Reflects the comprehensive nature of consultancy work, requiring students to synthesize financial, spatial, and transport data.

Economic & Financial Acumen - Students assess market conditions, funding models, and cost-benefit scenarios—core skills for development appraisal.

Transport Planning Integration - Encourages holistic thinking by embedding accessibility, connectivity, and modal choices into the viability framework.

Risk Management Competence - Students must anticipate and address legal, political, and environmental uncertainties, preparing them for complex decision-making.

Communication Skills - Producing a structured, persuasive report hones professional writing and presentation abilities.

Resits – a similar assessment brief to that described above to satisfy the module learning outcomes.

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:

Report (First Sit)

Description: Task 1: Policy Impact Critique Paper of 1,500 words - this assignment asks students to critically evaluate the impacts of the policies and governance structures on a selected development project

Weighting: 25 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO3

Practical Skills Assessment (First Sit)

Description: Task 2: Feasibility report for proposed project development (3000 words)

Weighting: 75 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO4

Report (Resit)

Description: Task 1: Policy Impact Critique Paper of 1,500 words - this assignment asks students to critically evaluate the impacts of the policies and governance structures on a selected development project

Weighting: 25 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO3

Practical Skills Assessment (Resit)

Description: Task 2: Feasibility report for proposed project development (3000 words)

Weighting: 75 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO4

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Planning and Urban Leadership [Distance] MSc 2026-27

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