



## **Module Specification**

### **Achieving Design Quality**

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## Part 1: Information

**Module title:** Achieving Design Quality

**Module code:** UBGLXQ-15-3

**Level:** Level 6

**For implementation from:** 2023-24

**UWE credit rating:** 15

**ECTS credit rating:** 7.5

**Faculty:** Faculty of Environment & Technology

**Department:** FET Dept of Geography & Environmental Mgmt

**Partner institutions:** None

**Field:** Geography and Environmental Management

**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:** Not applicable

**Features:** Not applicable

**Educational aims:** In addition to the learning outcomes, transferable skills developed through the module will include:

Recognising the role of communication skills in the planning process and the

importance of working in an interdisciplinary context

Being able to demonstrate negotiation, mediation, advocacy

Being aware of, listening to and evaluating the opinions and values of others (by participating in a design review)

Developing skills in plan and document production, by using packages such as Digimap, AutoCad, Adobe InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop.

The programme to which this module contributes has been developed with reference to the Royal Town Planning Institute spatial planning learning outcomes as set out in the RTPI (2012) Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education (online):

SP1. Explain and demonstrate how spatial planning operates within the context of institutional and legal frameworks.

SP2. Generate integrated and well substantiated responses to spatial planning challenges.

SP3. 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.

SP4. Demonstrate how efficient resource management helps to deliver effective spatial planning.

SP5. Explain the political and ethical nature of spatial planning and reflect on how planners work effectively within democratic decision-making structures.

SP6. Explain the contribution that planning can make to the built and natural environment and in particular recognise the implications of climate change.

SP7. Debate the concept of rights and the legal and practical implications of

representing these rights in planning decision making process.

SP8. Evaluate different development strategies and the practical application of development finance; assess the implications for generating added value for the community.

SP9. 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.

SP10. Evaluate the principles and processes of design for creating high quality places and enhancing the public realm for the benefit of all in society.

SP11. Demonstrate effective research, analytical, evaluative and appraisal skills and the ability to reach appropriate, evidence based decisions.

SP12. 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.

SP13. 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 maintain and develop professional competence.

The spatial planning learning outcomes have been mapped to the learning outcomes in terms of where they are introduced, consolidated or assessed as follows:

MO1 consolidates and assesses SP10

MO2 consolidates and assesses SP9

MO3 consolidates and assesses SP10

MO4 consolidates and assesses SP10 and SP12

MO5 consolidates and assesses SP10

MO6 consolidates and assesses SP1 and SP5

MO7 consolidates and assesses SP12

MO8 consolidates and assesses SP12

Contribution to the Master of Planning/ Master of Planning (Geography) specialism

Both of the programmes above include a defined specialism around the theme of 'delivery and implementation' which responds to an important strand of the planning school's philosophy, i.e. helping to ensure projects and plans happen. The specialism starts in years one and two but is consolidated (and assessed) at levels three and four where greater emphasis is given to exploring some of the key theories relating to implementation. The programme approaches the specialism from a range of scales, both geographically but also in terms of the size and complexity of the project and plan.

The specialism encapsulates a number of key objectives, namely to ensure that projects and plans are:

Clearly defined and justified

Presented holistically, in order that common agendas can be developed and wider benefits pooled

Developed in collaboration with the public and other key stakeholders

Well-designed in aesthetic and visual terms, in order that they can be assimilated, and add-value, to the environment in which the policy or plan is proposed

Suitably project-managed to ensure projects and plans are delivered on time and at cost

Appraised in sustainability terms to ensure that possible impacts are recognised at an early stage of project design, and appropriate mitigation applied

Financially viable, with risks appropriately identified and accounted for

Supported by an appropriate delivery vehicle

Deliverable, by virtue of adhering to relevant legislation

Monitored and reviewed to ensure that relevant aims and objectives have been appropriately targeted

The following delivery and implementation specialism objectives have been mapped to the module:

Evaluate the social, economic, environmental and political context for the area of specialism (consolidated and assessed)

Evaluate the distinctive contribution of the specialism to the making of place and the mediation of space (consolidated and assessed)

Demonstrate the relationship within a spatial planning context of the particular area of specialism to other specialist areas of expertise (consolidated and assessed).

Assess the contribution of the specialism to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change (consolidated and assessed).

**Outline syllabus:** Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Knowing how to plan, encourage and secure high quality design is an essential skill for planners. Achieving good design is about creating places, buildings, or spaces that work well for everyone, look good, last well, and will adapt to the needs of future generations. Good design responds in a practical and creative way to both the function and identity of a place, and the individual constraints and opportunities arising from a site.

Alongside national guidance, such as that published in the National Planning Policy

Framework and Planning Policy Wales, policies to achieve design quality are also found in local and neighbourhood plans. Site or area-specific guidance can be provided by some kind of development brief, design framework or master plan, while many local authorities have also published broader advice (as some kind of supplementary planning document) to help reinforce the understanding, and subsequent application, of key design principles. Examples here would include guidance relating to the use of public art, the treatment of open space and the promotion of streets and spaces that are safe and unthreatening.

While the module encourages a critical appraisal of this guidance, particularly in terms of its ability to be implemented, the module focuses predominantly on the achievement of design quality through the development management process. Since the pedagogical approach to the module encourages 'learning by doing', students are offered direct experience in developing a site proposal that can suitably convey the principles for achieving good building and urban design (while at the same time ensuring that their proposals are physically and commercially viable). Students will be presented with a complex site that they will be expected to appraise, thereby allowing them to formulate a series of development options. One of these will be worked up into a fuller scheme and presented as a planning submission that will need to include a full design and access statement. The students will then change roles and will be expected to assess the merit, in design terms, of schemes submitted by their colleagues.

The module will conclude by considering how design quality can be secured and maintained as planning projects are implemented, with particular emphasis being given to the type of measures that can be incorporated into planning conditions or some kind of legal agreement. Examples would include the need for some kind of design code or public realm or landscape strategy to be submitted before development commences.

Accordingly, the syllabus will explore the following:

The objectives for achieving design excellence in both building and urban design, including a summary of important terms and expressions

The principles and requirements that underpin inclusive building and urban design

The design process, including the need to respond to careful area and site analysis and the financial and market considerations surrounding a project

Achieving design excellence through policy, and the type of barriers that planners (and other stakeholders) face in implementing these aims and objectives on the ground

The consideration of design through the preparation and consideration of a planning submission

Making a planning application: pre application work, legal requirements, making a case, and submission content

The process by which a planning application is processed, including validation, registration, consultation, notification, consideration, negotiation, recommendation and decision

The changing nature of development management, including consideration of the devolved planning systems in England, Wales and Scotland

Theoretical concepts in decision-making. This will include: the need for development control, discretion in decision making, professional ethics, democratic accountability, participation in the system, measurement of 'quality,' the move from reactive to more positive and communicative planning.

### **Part 3: Teaching and learning methods**

**Teaching and learning methods:** Scheduled learning includes lectures, site visits, guest speakers and workshops.

Independent learning includes essential reading, assignment preparation and completion etc, site visits to the study area and to visit examples of good practice.

This is a project module delivered through a series of studio based lectures, discussions and workshops. Students are expected to participate actively and much of the teaching requires students to emulate the professional situation. The module links very closely to live examples and uses case studies from the public and private sectors to illustrate the points being made. There is a strong emphasis on the understanding of 'best practice' in the subject field. The module also draws upon the interdisciplinary nature of the students in integrating the architecture and planning backgrounds of those participating.

Contact time: 50 hours

Assimilation and development of knowledge: 60 hours

Assessment: 40 hours

Total: 150 hours

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

**MO1** Evaluate the principles and processes of design for creating high quality places and spaces, consolidating and developing knowledge previously gained

**MO2** Explain the principles of inclusive design and evaluate the impacts of design decision making on the quality of life of the client and user

**MO3** Demonstrate an understanding of good urban and building design and be able to apply design objectives in formulating a site proposal

**MO4** Use the vocabulary and terminology of urban and building design accurately and to appreciate the contributions made by other disciplines, professions

**MO5** Identify, and critically appraise, the role that different forms of policy and design guidance have in securing design excellence at the site level

**MO6** Demonstrate a detailed and up to date understanding of how planning (and associated) applications are made and determined, consolidating and developing knowledge previously gained

**MO7** Practise those professional skills that are required to make a successful planning application, to advocate and negotiate a proposal for development, and to advise on the controls and guidance that can be used to secure and maintain design excellence (such as design coding)

**MO8** Gain experience in creating plans and drawings that are able to communicate and visualise a development proposal, both by hand and by using appropriate software

**Hours to be allocated:** 150

**Contact hours:**

Independent study/self-guided study = 100 hours

Face-to-face learning = 50 hours

Total = 150

**Reading list:** The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/ubglxq-15-3.html) via the following link <https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/ubglxq-15-3.html>

## **Part 4: Assessment**

**Assessment strategy:** The module will be assessed by a single assessment task that will take the form of a design and access statement which will need to explain and justify the student's individual site proposal. This will be developed progressively through the module with dedicated sessions being arranged to help with its production. These sessions will provide guidance on the portfolio's substantive content, as well as its visual design and production. The assessment will use, and extend, the range of skills developed in years one and two and create a substantial piece of work. A limit of 3,000 words will be applied to the portfolio; reference will be made to the university's word count policy in doing so.

The portfolio will allow for the assessment of learning outcomes 1-8.

Although each student's proposal will be shaped by group critique, each submission will be assessed individually. Work will be assessed on the basis of the student's:

Understanding of the urban context

Understanding of the policy context in which the planning application is made and relating to that proposal

Ability to contribute and present visual information

Explanation of the proposal

Overall presentation.

Expectations concerning each of these bullets will be discussed during module sessions.

Re-sit work will follow the same broad format.

The assessment is felt to minimise the risk for plagiarism on the basis that each portfolio will focus upon a student's individual proposal, which will be developed under tutor supervision over a series of weeks.

Students will be able to present their portfolio for formative review in advance of the deadline. Example portfolios will be made available to the cohort for review, with care being taken to ensure that these relate to a different site and design brief.

### **Assessment tasks:**

#### **Portfolio (First Sit)**

Description: Portfolio - Design and access statement (3000 words plus visual material)

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6, MO7, MO8

### **Portfolio (Resit)**

Description: Portfolio - Design and access statement (3000 words plus visual material)

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6, MO7, MO8

## **Part 5: Contributes towards**

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Urban Planning [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Property Development and Planning [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22

Urban Planning {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Property Development and Planning [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Property Development and Planning {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Urban Planning [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Property Development and Planning {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BA (Hons) 2019-20

Urban Planning {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2019-20