



Programme Specification

Planning and Urban Leadership [Distance]

Version: 2026-27, v2.0, Validated

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Section 1: Key Programme Details

Part A: Programme Information

Programme title: Planning and Urban Leadership [Distance]

Highest award: MSc Planning and Urban Leadership

Interim award: PGCert Planning and Urban Leadership

Interim award: PGDip Planning and Urban Leadership

Awarding institution: UWE Bristol

Teaching institutions: UWE Bristol

Study abroad: No

Year abroad: No

Sandwich year: No

Credit recognition: No

School responsible for the programme: CATE School of Architecture and Environment, College of Arts, Technology and Environment

Professional, statutory or regulatory bodies:

Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)

Modes of delivery: Distance without attendance

Entry requirements: For the current entry requirements see the UWE public website

For implementation from: 01 September 2026

Programme code: K40U00

Section 2: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Part A: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Overview: The MSc Planning and Urban Leadership is a one year (full-time) or two year (part time), distance learning postgraduate master's programme. It is open to graduates from both cognate disciplines (such as geography, property, law, architecture, and environmental studies/sciences) and from non-traditional routes (students from non-cognate disciplines and those with professional experience within planning and aligned built and natural environment disciplines). The entry and delivery arrangements are designed to maximise access to this offer. The programme prepares students for work in the planning, property, and development industries 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 thereby reinforcing the university's ambitions towards global citizenship by creating an environment and culture in which all students have the opportunity to develop and use the skills and understanding required to contribute to global sustainability throughout their careers.

The programme is concerned with the management of the built and natural environment, with a specialism focused around how town planners lead change through the delivery of major projects. Sustainability is the 'golden thread' that runs through the planning discipline and this central concept is embedded in all modules on the programme. The social, environmental, and economic narratives of sustainable development all pertinent in all modules, with a consideration of the impact and implications of change in different contexts. The UWE Bristol staff within the RTPI Planning School are associated with Research Centres with a strong focus upon sustainable development, this includes the Centre for Transport and Society and, in particular from the perspective of the core teaching team, the Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments (SPE). This enable a research informed approach to teaching with a strong focus upon sustainable development. The SPE centre carries out research on furthering our understanding of what sustainable places are, and the processes involved in achieving them. The Centre seeks to provide research evidence at different scales from the neighbourhood to the region, and to understand the social construction of urban problems and solutions. Three key themes that SPE focusses on are: Sustainable urban environments; Governance

of place; and Planning theory, policy and practice.

Course content is primarily grounded in the UK context but the programme is designed to be suitable for international student study. Individual modules include collaborative study and case study / best practice study from all around the globe, and selected assessment are flexible to allow students to ground their responses in their local context. This allows the programme to be adaptable to circumstance and support students to not only explore planning through an international lens, but also apply it to the most appropriate context for their own learning experience.

The programme has been designed to satisfy accreditation requirements by the Royal Town Planning Institute as initial planning education, representing a Combined Award with both the Spatial and Specialism elements as required. The Specialism will provide a focus on strategic place change management, exploring the manner in which planning leads change through major and strategic projects in the built environment.

Features of the programme: The School of Architecture And Environment (SAAE) has extensive experience in the delivery of successful online learning, The critical importance of effective student support for an online community is therefore recognised.

A key element of this course is the creation of an online shared space where the cohort can engage and interact. Beyond supporting learning, this platform plays an essential role in reducing feelings of learner isolation.

Creating spaces for interaction supports both the student centred and enquiry-based approach, but also creates an environment for human interaction. Distance learning creates challenges beyond the practical ability of the student to undertake the knowledge and understanding journey effectively as a result of the potential lack of opportunity to articulate thought and interact in the discourse, there is also the wellbeing of the 'isolated learner'.

The psychological effects of remote and isolated study, particularly the absence of an immediate peer group that enable creativity, collaboration, and social support, are significant. This challenge is further reflected in the higher-than-average dropout rates commonly associated with online learning.

The programme will therefore be underpinned by an online environment to support not only the learning journey but also create a space for human interaction, reducing the implications of learner isolation. A key element to this is the use of a 'third space' separate to the Blackboard VLE; a space with shared ownership, separate from the institutional space, enables the possibility of a different environment in which students can experience enhanced freedom and flexibility for appropriate interactions.

In addition to the VLE, students will also have access to the full range of departmental and centrally provided support. From the academic perspective the module team will provide ongoing learner support, in the context of both the assessments and wider learning journey. Central support, including the library, FET.SAT, disability support, student advisors, and careers have all developed experience and capacity over recent years with respect of distance learning student support; students on this programme will have full access to professional and personal support services and the range of services they offer.

Field trips will be optional and will be offered in partnership with existing PG programmes offered by SAAE, most notably the MSc Urban Planning programme .

Students will be given access, where possible, to UWE Planning School activities and events.

Educational Aims: The programme aims:

To provide a coherent programme of advanced postgraduate study in urban planning, which is firmly underpinned by a wide range of research (including that carried out by staff who teach on the programme) and by Faculty scholarship, consultancy, and links with practice

To draw 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

To deliver study by distance learning to maximise access to the programme for students in diverse situations and global geographical locations

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 and those without recent Higher Education study

To provide an opportunity for students to study a Specialism in strategic place change management, focusing upon the manner in which planning professionals lead and undertake strategic change in the built environment. This sits alongside a course built around core planning knowledge and skills

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 Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this programme graduates will achieve the following learning outcomes.

Programme Learning Outcomes

- PO1. Planning Theory: Comprehend spatial planning across various contexts and local and global development scales.
- PO2. Planning Law: Comprehend statutory land use planning systems and regulatory frameworks in the UK as well as internationally.
- PO3. Political Framework: Recognise the political nature of spatial planning and democratic decision-making structures.
- PO4. Climate Change: Analyse sustainable development and balance social, economic, and environmental objectives.

- PO5. Placemaking and Design: Evaluate principles for creating high-quality places and enhancing the public realm.
- PO6. Stakeholder Engagement: Explore opportunities and challenges in engaging with Engage with diverse stakeholders and plan for effective community involvement.
- PO7. Economic Framework: Develop proficiency in land and property market economics and development finance.
- PO8. Professional Ethics: Uphold ethical behaviour, professional competence, and leadership standards for planners.
- PO9. Evidence and Research: Evaluate evidence quality and apply effective research strategies for carrying out an independent research project.
- PO10. Communication and Teamwork: Communicate complex material effectively, demonstrate leadership, and work well in teams and autonomously.

Assessment strategy: This programme employs an assessment strategy designed to support academic and professional knowledge and skills development. The programme includes the following assessment formats:

Academic essays to enable students to demonstrate academic research, inquiry, reflection, and thoughtful argumentation underpinned by academic robustness.

Presentations to allow demonstration of effective communication skills, interpersonal skills, confidence, professional presentation skills, and controlled assessment consideration of knowledge and understanding, including opportunity to challenge via critical questioning.

Reports and practice submissions to allow demonstration of professional research, inquiry, reflection, and effective argumentation underpinned by practice robustness.

Portfolio submissions to enable holistic assessment of both practice and professional skills, knowledge and understanding including design/visual skills.

Assessment will include requirements for both independent and group-based work, supporting demonstration of personal and professional skills such as self-reliance,

negotiation, mediation, advocacy, independent study, inter-personal skills, project management, and presentation skills (written, visual, and oral).

A core concept underpinning the programme is the intention to create graduates with academic and professional knowledge and understanding, but also practice competence and personal/professional skills. The assessment strategy is key to the enabling of this, with assessments balancing the academic needs of Higher Education study with the ability to require students to create practice orientation assessment outputs which demonstrate professional ability and competencies. As noted above, graduates will not only understand their subject and discipline, they will also have the skills and abilities required to work effectively within their chosen industry.

The assessment strategy further requires students to demonstrate technological skills and the use of a range of software packages.

The programmatic approach to assessment ensures that across the programme of study the full range of assessment formats are mapped appropriately. Effective support through the online learning and interaction environments will ensure that this distance learning group are provided with the support required to enable assessment success.

Student support: Students have multiple opportunities to seek clarification and support throughout the course. They can ask questions at the end of each lecture and request one-to-one meetings whenever issues arise in their coursework. Additionally, Q&A sessions are held prior to assessment periods, complemented by pop-up sessions for discussions and feedback. Finally, student feedback is also gathered through designated student representatives.

Part B: Programme Structure

Year 1

Students on the 2 year programme must take 90 credits from the modules in Year 1. Students on the 1 year programme must take 180 credits from the modules in Year 1.

Year 1 Compulsory Modules (1 Year Students)

Students on the 1 year programme must take 180 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (1 Year Students).

Interim award: PGDip requires 120 credits excluding dissertation

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLLC5-30-M	Introduction to Planning Practice 2026-27	30
UBLLC7-30-M	Project Viability and Risk Management 2026-27	30
UBLLCJ-30-M	Strategic Projects 2026-27	30
UBGMT6-30-M	Dissertation 2026-27	30
UBGMM9-30-M	International Planning Practice 2026-27	30
UBGLJ1-30-M	Leading Urban Change 2026-27	30

Year 1 Compulsory Modules (2 Year Students)

Students on the 2 year programme must take 90 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (2 Year Students).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBGLJ1-30-M	Leading Urban Change 2026-27	30
UBLLC7-30-M	Project Viability and Risk Management 2026-27	30
UBLLC5-30-M	Introduction to Planning Practice 2026-27	30

Year 2

Students on the 2 year programme must take 90 credits from the modules in Year 2.

Interim award: PGDip requires 120 credits

Year 2 Compulsory Modules (2 Year Students)

Students on the 2 year programme must take 90 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (2 Year Students).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLLCJ-30-M	Strategic Projects 2027-28	30
UBGMT6-30-M	Dissertation 2027-28	30
UBGMM9-30-M	International Planning Practice 2027-28	30

Part C: Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) Synopsis

This programme provides students with the academic and professional skills, experience and knowledge to enable effective engagement in the discipline and industries of the built and natural environment. The programme explores matters pertaining to managing change within the built and natural environment, inclusive of the implications and demands of, and perspectives on, sustainable development and the wider sustainability agenda. The programme enables the development of subject specific and transferable skills, including team working, leadership, evidence collection, evidence analysis, evidence interrogations, inter-personal skills, presentation and written skills, and the skills associated with professional practice thereby reinforcing the university's ambitions towards global citizenship by creating an environment and culture in which all students have the opportunity to develop and use the skills and understanding required to contribute to global sustainability throughout their careers.

Part D: External Reference Points and Benchmarks

This programme has been designed to meet the educational requirements of the Royal Town Planning Institute. The programme aims and learning objectives are

directly derived from the requirements associated with programme accreditation by the RTPI.

Part E: Regulations

Approved to University Regulations and Procedures.