

MSc/Postgraduate Diploma/Postgraduate Certificate in Development Planning & Research For students entering in 2008

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading Henley Business School
Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s):	Town and Country Planning
Programme length:	12 months (full-time) or 24 months (part-time)
Date of specification:	September 2008
Programme Director:	Gavin Parker
Board of Studies:	Postgraduate Programmes in REP
Professional Accreditation:	RTPI and RICS

Summary of programme aims

The aim of this degree is to prepare graduates for a career in town and country planning where they may be required to research and prepare policies and plans; negotiate and regulate development schemes; undertake community consultations; and present reports to committees and at public enquiries. In line with the academic strengths of the University of Reading Business School in real estate markets, investment and development, the MSc develops specialist knowledge and skills in 'development planning'. This focuses on planning as it engages with economic and property development processes at all levels, from the local to the European. It also contains a pathway in International Planning to allow students to focus on comparative approaches to development planning issues. The MSc Development Planning and Research allows students to develop research skills and the opportunity to undertake in-depth dissertation-based research and analysis in this area.

Transferable skills

The Royal Town Planning Institute, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Construction Industry Council have identified a number of generic transferable and intellectual skills that students are expected to have developed by the end of their professionally accredited programme of study. In following these programmes, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to research, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem solving, team working, negotiation, leadership and use of information technology.

The MSc Development Planning and Research programme is designed to ensure that students progressively develop these transferable skills throughout their studies, in parallel, and integrated, with acquiring the specialist planning knowledge, understanding and skills.

Programme structure and content

The MSc Development Planning and Research is designed within a 180 credit modular structure with five 20-credit modules and two 40-credit modules for Planning Projects and the Dissertation. This credit weighting reflects the educational requirements of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, which are in-line with the general University scheme.

For full-time students, the first part of the programme lasts up to the Summer Term examination period and students are required to take five 20-credit modules and one 40-credit module, totalling 140 credits, in this period. Following an intensive induction period that includes a regional field visit (as part of the Planning Projects module), full-time students are required to undertake Built and Natural Environment and the Research Methods module. The latter provides directed support for the 40-credit Dissertation (which runs through the rest of the year). They also begin modules in Planning Theory, Politics and Practice; Planning Projects (40-credits) and, for the Development Planning Pathway, Real Estate Economics; which run over the Autumn and Spring terms. In the second term of the programme students are required to take Real Estate Development or the International Planning modules depending on their pathway choice. The Planning Projects module concludes with a comparative project during a European

field visit (at the end of the Easter vacation/week one of the Summer term). During the Summer Term, consolidation and revision periods for those modules that are examined are followed by the formal examination papers. The second part of the programme takes place after the examination period, although it is introduced during the Autumn Term. During this period students complete work on their 40-credit Dissertations, which are then submitted in September.

The table below sets out the full module list.

Module Code	Module Name	Credit Weight Level		MSc DP&R Pathways	
REMP01	Built and Natural Environment	20	M		
REMP02	Planning Theory, Politics and Practice	20	M		
REMP13	Planning Projects	40	M		
REMF11	Research Methods	20	M		
ECMFRE	Real Estate Economics	20	M		
REMF07	Real Estate Development	20	M		
REMP10	Dissertation	40	M	(Development Planning)	
REMP11	International Planning 1	20	M		
REMP12	International Planning 2	20	M		(International Planning)

Part-time/Modular arrangements

Students undertaking the programme on a part time (day-release) basis complete the same modules, but in a slightly different sequence. In their first year they study Built and Natural Environment; Real Estate Economics/International Planning 1; Planning Theory, Politics and Practice; and Real Estate Development/International Planning 2. The second year involves completion of modules in Planning Projects; Research Methods; and the 10,000-word Dissertation during the Summer.

Progression requirements

None

Summary of teaching and assessment

Teaching is organised in five 20-credit modules and two 40-credit modules; each credit representing at least 10 hours of student effort. The relationship between class contact in the form of lecture, workshop, seminar, tutorial and student centred learning in the form of individual research and project/case study is varied across all modules and is set out in the individual module descriptions. All modules are designed to deliver M level outcomes. Within each of these modules, the overall aim is for students to be able to understand the knowledge obtained and be critically aware of the theoretical and practical implications of the material.

Students will be assessed by a range of methods, including formal examination papers and individual and group assignments including applied problem solving, essays, literature reviews, reports, presentations and projects. The 10,000-word dissertation provides an opportunity to research a particular area of development planning in some depth. The formal examinations will take place in June of each year. Students will have the right to re-sit any module once. Normally examination and assignment re-sits will be in early September. Any re-assessment in the Dissertation would normally take place within one year.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
<u>Failing categories</u>	
40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degree

To pass the MSc, students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall in modules worth 180 credits including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more over 180 credits including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more over 180 credits including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

For PG Diploma

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more in modules worth 120 credits. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more over 120 credits and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more over 120 credits and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

For PG Certificate

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more in modules worth 60 credits. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.

The MSc Development Planning & Research programme offers PG Diploma and PG Certificate awards but *these awards, in themselves, are not accredited within the University's partnership arrangements with the RTPI or RICS. The University is currently seeking RTPI accreditation for the MSc DP&R International Pathway.*

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained a good (normally upper second class honours) undergraduate degree in any cognate discipline.

Admissions Tutor: Gavin Parker

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors and the Students' Union.

Career prospects

Students graduating from the post-graduate planning programme have been regularly employed by local authorities, government agencies and the largest and most prestigious firms of planning and property consultants including: RPS; Terence O'Rourke; Barton Willmore; Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners; Arups; WS Atkins; DTZ Debenham Thorpe, Drivers Jonas, GVA Grimley and CB Richard Ellis. Reading graduates have progressed to senior positions in these and other organisations both in the UK and around the world.

Additionally graduates have found employment with development companies (for example, Slough Estates, Countryside Properties, Berkeley Homes), voluntary sector organisations and the private corporate sector. Traditionally our students have had little difficulty in securing employment and, even during the recession, the vast majority of our graduates had secured employment or were undertaking further study within three months of the end of their programme.

Students who take the programme on a part-time (day-release) basis are employed by local planning authorities or planning and development consultancies. On graduation, they often move quickly into senior positions in their own organisations or with other employers. The 'development planning' specialism offered by the Reading programme regularly facilitates them in their early career path, as it provides sought-after knowledge and skills required in private and public sector planning work.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

The intensive nature of the full-time 12-month MSc programme is not ideally tailored to study abroad, although MSc students can undertake a SOCRATES-funded block of study during the latter part of the Summer Term and Summer Vacation. The SOCRATES Programme is a European Union initiative to facilitate student mobility. It provides students with a chance to spend a recognised period of study (normally between 3 and 12 months) in another EU country. This would normally be linked to the student's work on the Dissertation. Grants are available to support the costs of such arrangements and details are available from Eamonn D'Arcy. There is also, of course, the compulsory attendance at the European field visit as part of the Planning Projects module.

Educational aims of the programme

The MSc programme combines a blend of academic rigour and applied practical analysis. The programme aims to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for successful careers in national, European and International planning and development agencies. The MSc DP&R (Development Planning Pathway) is accredited within the University's partnership arrangements with the RTPI and the RICS and the University is seeking RTPI accreditation for the MSc DP&R (International Planning Pathway). The aims of the programme are to provide students with a structured learning framework and to ensure that the skill areas covered by the programme are applicable to a range of occupational and professional needs while relevant to other possible future career paths. The MSc DP&R (Development Planning Pathway) places emphasis on planning's relationship with development processes, leading to specialist understanding and skills in the area of 'development planning', and builds research skills in this area through the preparation of a 12,000-word dissertation and supporting Research Methods module. The MSc DP&R (International Planning Pathway) provides in-depth analysis of comparative approaches to development planning issues using the International Planning modules and the Dissertation to embed knowledge and skills in this area.

Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

The case for and against spatial planning and particular forms of spatial planning, assessing what can be learnt from past experiences of spatial planning in different socio-economic, cultural and political contexts.

The importance of design in creating high quality places and enhancing the public realm for the benefit of all in society (and evaluating the effectiveness of alternative design approaches in achieving this).

The importance of time in the planning process, realising how the short-term and longer-term consequences of planning decisions may impact differentially on those affected.

The concept of rights, including the balance between individual and collective rights, and the legal and practical implications of representing rights in planning decision frameworks.

Stakeholder involvement and public participation in the planning process and about engaging and communicating with (by appropriate and varied means) a diverse range of interests, including local residents and community groups, business people, commercial developers, politicians and protest groups.

The meaning of professionalism, including probity and adherence to independent informed judgement; the identification of clients and the duties owed to them; the concept of conflict of interests; and the importance of a commitment to lifelong learning to maintain and expand professional competence.

The role in the planning process of such skills as negotiation, mediation, and advocacy and the importance of team-working, often with other professionals, in an inter-disciplinary context.



Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Acquisition of knowledge is promoted across the programme through directed reading, lectures, tutorials, seminars, case studies, role-playing exercises, field visits, guest lectures, other project-based assignments, and through individual tutoring with academic staff.

The use of Blackboard provides support to enable students to deepen their understanding and extend their knowledge.

The Dissertation and its supporting Research Methods module allow students to develop in-depth understanding of a particular aspect of development planning.

Assessment

Most of the modules are assessed through a combination of assignment (in the forms identified earlier) and formal examination. The project-based modules are assessed through coursework assignments.

The importance of resource issues (in particular, those concerning human and financial resources) and organisational management processes and initiatives in helping to deliver effective spatial planning, and acknowledging the need for personal flexibility, adaptability and self-management, as demonstrated in setting priorities, managing time, and knowing how and when to seek input from others.

The specialist areas of ‘development planning’ and ‘international planning’, including the ability to:

- Engage in theoretical and practical debate at the forefront of the area of specialism.
- Appreciate the social, economic, environmental and political context for the area of specialism.
- Evaluate the distinctive contribution potentially rendered by the area of specialism to the making of place and the mediation of space.
- Demonstrate mature understanding of the relationship within a multidisciplinary context of the particular area of specialism to other specialist areas of expertise.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:

Generate visionary and imaginative responses to spatial planning challenges that are realistic and derive from substantial investigation and analysis of relevant data and other evidence.

Articulate such responses through coherent and integrated strategies, plans or programmes that combine creative direction for the future with credible means of implementation.

Balance the significance of such strategies, plans or programmes, either in whole or in part, against other relevant factors that ought to be taken into account in reaching an individual planning decision.

Demonstrate effective research and appraisal skills, evident in data collection, investigation, quantitative and qualitative analysis, weighing evidence and reaching sound conclusions.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Practical projects, seminars, case studies and other exercises are the main but not the sole mechanisms for developing skills on the programme. The skills areas are those specified in the current (draft) RTPI Educational Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education (RTPI, 2003) and those produced for the Construction Industry Council's 'Common Learning Outcomes' (CIC, 1997).

Assessment

Intellectual skills are assessed through a wide variety of approaches including essays, unseen examination papers, group projects, specialist exercises, presentations, tutorial & seminar papers, the dissertation and reports.

C. Practical skills – able to:

Undertake the type and quality of initial skills that might reasonably be expected of a graduate in the specialist areas of 'development or international planning', such as:

- strategy/plan preparation,
- financial appraisal,
- site planning,
- negotiation,
- grant-packaging and
- market analysis.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Practical projects, seminars, case studies and other exercises are the main but not the sole mechanisms for developing skills on the programme.

Assessment

These skills are primarily assessed through coursework, in the form of project submissions and final reports and through presentations.

D. Transferable skills – able to:

- Prepare and present a written report.
- Prepare and make an oral presentation.
- Participate in a forum where their own view(s) are subjected to peer group criticism.
- Engage in an activity requiring manipulation of numbers.
- Prepare and make a presentation involving graphical description.
- Engage in an activity requiring use of information technology.
- Obtain set goals whilst working in a group.
- Perform a set role within a group setting.
- Achieve set goals whilst chairing a group.
- Negotiate and progress the resolution of a dispute.
- Identify and codify the roles of individuals in a group at work.



Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Practical projects, seminars, case studies and other exercises are the main but not the sole mechanisms for developing skills on the programme. The Planning Projects module contains a number of exercises that develop and test these skills, although other modules also call upon students to use these transferable skills.

Assessment

Skills are primarily assessed through coursework, in the form of project submissions and final reports; through presentations; and research on the dissertation.

Please note: 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 each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.