

**MSc Spatial Planning and Research (full-time)  
For students entering in 2015/6**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Henley Business School at Univ of Reading
Programme length:	12 months
Date of specification:	25/Aug/2015
Programme Director:	Prof Gavin Parker
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	HBS Pre Exp BOS
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 Real Estate and Planning, University of Reading 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. The MSc in Spatial Planning and Research also 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 in Spatial 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 content**

The MSc Spatial Planning and Research programme is designed within a 180 credit modular structure with five 20-credit modules, two ten credit modules and two 30-credit modules for Projects in Planning and the Planning 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 fulltime 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 30-credit module, totalling 140 credits, in this period. Following an intensive induction period that includes a regional field visit; fulltime students are required to undertake Urban Design and Sustainability module and the Research Methods #1&2 modules. The latter provides directed support for the 30-credit Dissertation (which runs through the rest of the year). They also begin modules in Planning Theory, Politics and Practice; Projects in Planning (30-credits) and, Real Estate Economics; which runs over the autumn and spring terms. In the second term of the programme students are required to take Real Estate Development. The Projects in Planning 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 30-credit Planning Dissertations, which are then submitted in September.

The table below sets out the full module list.

Code	Title	Credits	Level
REMP02	Planning Theory, Politics and Practice	20	7
REMP16	Urban Design and Sustainability	20	7
REMP20	Research Methods 1	10	7
REMP21	Research Methods 2	10	7

REMP18	Projects in Planning	30	7
REMP22	Planning Dissertation	30	7
REMFRE	Real Estate Economics	20	7
REMP29	Real Estate Development (Planning focus)	20	7
In addition students choose options to the value of 20 credits.			
REMP19	Comparative International Planning Studies	20	7
REMP06	Strategic Planning	20	7
REMP07	Property and Environment	20	7
REMP08	Regeneration	20	7
REMP14	Countryside Planning and Policy	20	7
REMP40	International Housing Policy & Management	20	7

### **Part-time or 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 Urban Design and Sustainability; Real Estate Economics, Planning Theory, Politics and Practice, and Real Estate Development (Planning Focus). The second year involves completion of modules in Projects and Planning, Research Methods 1 and 2, an optional module and the 9,000-word Dissertation during the summer period.

### **Progression requirements**

None

### **Summary of Teaching and Assessment**

Teaching is organised in five 20-credit modules, two 10-credit modules and two 30-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 level 7 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 9,000-word dissertation provides an opportunity to research a particular area of development planning in some depth. The formal examinations will take place in May 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:

#### **Mark Interpretation**

70 - 100% Distinction

60 - 69% Merit

50 - 59% Good standard (Pass)

#### **Failing categories**

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 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 overall 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 overall 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 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 and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more 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 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.

In order to meet the RTPI's APC requirements candidates must demonstrate that they have met the indicative learning outcomes detailed in the RTPI's Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education. **These learning outcomes are covered by the core (non-option) modules on each of the MSc programmes and so, these must be passed in order to pass the RTPI-accredited MSc programme.**

### **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:** Dr Richard Nunes - [r.j.nunes@reading.ac.uk](mailto:r.j.nunes@reading.ac.uk)

### **Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Careers, Placement and Experience Centre (CPEC), In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and 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 Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing, academic issues (eg problems with module selection) and exam related queries. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see [www.reading.ac.uk/student](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)

Students from the School of Real Estate and Planning have access to the Academic Resource Centre (ARC) located on the ground floor of the Henley Business School. This contains key planning texts, journals and a 'bank' of photocopied recommended reading. The collection is for reference only but there are photocopying facilities available. The School has bought access to specialised planning databases including 'Planex'. The ARC has its own staff who are available to assist and who can advise on bibliographic searching and / or use of electronic material. The room also contains government publications, reports, working papers, an archive of Berkshire local development and structure plans, and a collection of professional videos.

The specialist Law Library within the main library has a stock of about 26,000 volumes. It possesses a very complete collection of government documents including all parliamentary papers, public general acts and statutory instruments, and a wide selection of government publications on planning. The Library is a designated European Documentation Centre, taking a wide selection of European Union publications including the Official Journal and all Communications. The Short Loan Collection enables students to borrow books in strong demand overnight. Specialist staff are available to advise on subject areas. The Liaison Librarian for Real Estate and Planning is currently Gordon Connell - tel. 0118 378 7142 or email. [g.connell@reading.ac.uk](mailto:g.connell@reading.ac.uk). The Map Library is housed in the Department of Geography and contains 60,000 items. It contains all British Ordnance Survey Thematic Series, and all topographic maps at 1:25,000 and smaller scales. Larger scale maps and negatives for

reproduction are available for local areas, and there is an extensive international collection. The Map Library subscribes to the Digimap online map service and maps and plans for selective areas can be downloaded and used by students in their project work.

The School of Real Estate and Planning has 50 machines specifically for use by real estate and planning students. All students are given an email address when they register and all the machines are networked allowing students free access to email and use of the World Wide Web. In addition to the School facilities all planning students have access to the University IT services. Furthermore, the Department of Geography has a computing lab and a strong interest and capability in Geographic Information Systems and in remote sensing. All of the postgraduate planning modules make use of the University's Web-based learning resources delivered through the Blackboard facility. Students will be enrolled onto relevant modules and can use their ITS usernames and passwords to log on to the Blackboard system (at <http://www.bb.reading.ac.uk>)

### **Career prospects**

Students graduating from the postgraduate 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; Atkins; DTZ, Drivers Jonas, Deloitte, GVA and CBRE. Reading graduates have progressed to senior positions in these and other organisations both in the UK and around the world.

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Additionally graduates have found employment with development companies (for example, Taylor Wimpey, SEGRO, Countryside Properties, Berkeley Homes, Crest Nicholson), 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 fulltime 12-month MSc programme is not ideally tailored to study abroad, although MSc students can undertake an EU -funded block of study during the latter part of the Summer Term and Summer Vacation. The ERASMUS 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 may be available to support the costs of such arrangements. There is also, of course, the compulsory attendance at the European field visit as part of the Projects in Planning module.

### **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:**

1. 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.
2. The importance of design in creating high

##### **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.

- 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).
3. 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.
  4. 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.
  5. 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.
  6. 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.
  7. 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.
  8. 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.
  9. 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.

- 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.

### **Skills and other attributes**

**B. Intellectual skills - *able to*:**

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

1. 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.
2. Articulate such responses through coherent and integrated strategies, plans or programmes that combine creative direction for the future with credible means of implementation.
3. 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.
4. Demonstrate effective research and appraisal skills, evident in data collection, investigation, quantitative and qualitative analysis, weighing evidence and reaching sound conclusions.

### C. Practical skills - *able to*:

1. 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:
  2. strategy/plan preparation,
  3. financial appraisal,
  4. site planning,
  5. negotiation,
  6. grant-packaging and
  7. market analysis.

### D. Transferable skills - *able to*:

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

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 RTPI Educational Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education and those produced for the Construction Industry Council's 'Common Learning Outcomes'.

#### *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.

### 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.

### 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 Projects in Planning 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 process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**