

Programme Specification

MSc Spatial Planning and Development (full-time)

PFTZSPADEVHM

MSc Spatial Planning and Development (part-time)

PPTZSPADEVHM

For students entering in 2027/28

This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	MSc Spatial Planning and Development (full-time) - 12 months MSc Spatial Planning and Development (part-time) - 24 months
Accreditation	Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS)
Programme Start Dates	September
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	Town and Country Planning

Programme information and content

The activities of planning and development professionals are fundamental to our environmental, social and economic development, and impact the lives of countless individuals.

The MSc Spatial Planning and Development aims to take students from a wide range of backgrounds and equip you with the necessary attitudes, knowledges and skills to intervene in the built and natural environment, with the aim of creating better places at multiple scales for all who live there. The value of the programme lies in its dual professional accreditation, by both the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Graduates from the programme are eligible to pursue a career as a chartered planner and/or planning and development surveyor.

The programme is designed within a 180 credit modular structure with seven 20-credit modules, of which two are selected from a list of optional modules, and one 40-credit module; the Independent Study in Planning & Development. This credit weighting reflects the educational requirements of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), which are in-line with the general University scheme.

The first semester will ground you in core knowledges around the philosophical and regulatory underpinnings of planning, sustainability, place quality and design. You will start applying these to develop your understanding of the sites/scenarios that form the basis for your projects, through the first of a series of group and individual assignments. Alongside this, you will start to develop a range of skills in research, communication and employability that will underpin your academic and professional development throughout the course.

By the end of the first semester it is expected that you will have developed a clear understanding of the purpose and contribution of planning and development in shaping places at multiple scales.

The second semester gives you the opportunity to develop your understanding of specialist areas of knowledge through two elective modules, as well as starting to develop your own area of interest through an independent study. Simultaneously, you will continue to work on the sites and scenarios introduced in Semester 1, moving through the process of developing and evaluating your responses, and presenting these to ‘clients’ and other ‘key stakeholders’. You will also take part in an international field-trip, using your research and analysis skills to hone your critical understanding of how planning and development processes in the UK compare to those operating in other contexts.

By the end of the second semester it is expected that you will be able to critically evaluate planning and development processes, including how this is shaped by the contemporary (and evolving) institutional context, how this compares with other contexts and how adopting different perspectives shapes the quality of places.

During the Summer period you will continue to engage in an independent study (started in Semester 1 and further developed in Semester 2), addressing a topic of your choosing, and allowing you to develop in-depth knowledge of a particular area. By the end of the third semester it is expected that you will be able to articulate the importance of your chosen theme of study and explain how your work contributes to the development of that theme.

Programme Learning Outcomes

-MSc Spatial Planning and Development (full-time)

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

	Learning outcomes
1	Evaluate what it means to be a planning and development professional in multiple settings, including the importance of ethical practice, independent professional judgement and working with other built environment professionals.
2	Demonstrate the implications of different theories about why and how we plan, including: for citizen involvement, balancing conflicting obligations to clients, politicians and the public interest and for multiple geographical and time scales.
3	Apply the principles of good placemaking and high quality urban design to generate creative proposals, incorporating considerations including environmental, social and economic sustainability.

4	Incorporate into decision-making the impacts of planning on the natural environment, including the importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the varied impacts of environmental damage on different groups.
5	Demonstrate effective research and appraisal skills through data collection, quantitative and qualitative analysis, weighing evidence to reach sound conclusions and the ability to communicate these conclusions in a variety of ways.
6	Evaluate scenarios within the context of planning law, political arenas, decision-making processes, and negotiation with relevant stakeholders, including using professional judgement to generate clear recommendations.
7	Synthesise a range of evidence and knowledges to develop planning and policy frameworks that set out a positive vision for the future of a place, including the diverse range of groups within it.
8	Apply skills and knowledge relevant to development planning including: the operation of land and property markets, real estate development processes and the appraisal of development viability.

You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

Module information			
The programme comprises 180 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.			
Compulsory modules			
Module	Name	Credits	Level
REMFRE	Real Estate Economics	20	M
REMP56	Planning 1 - Policy, Theory and Governance	20	M
REMP57	Planning 2 - Law, Negotiation and Ethics	20	M
REMP61	Development 1: Sustainable Urban Design and Site Planning	20	M
REMP62	Development 2: Process and Viability	20	M
REMP63	Independent Study in Planning and Development	40	M
Students will select 40 credits of optional modules available in Real Estate and Planning subjects.			
Part-time or flexible modular arrangements			
The programme can be taken part-time over two years. The programme may not be completed over more than two years.			
In the first year of study, a student will normally be required to complete 60 credits of compulsory modules, comprising REMFRE: Real Estate Economics, REMP56: Planning 1:			

Policy Theory and Governance and REMP57: Planning 2: Law, Negotiation and Ethics, and 20 credits of optional modules.

In the second year of study, a student will normally be required to complete 80 credits of compulsory modules, comprising REMP61: Development 1: Sustainable Urban Design and Site Planning, REMP62: Development 2: Process and Viability and REMP63: Independent Study in Planning and Development, and 20 credits of optional modules.

Placement opportunities

N/A

Study abroad opportunities

N/A

Optional modules

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Teaching and learning delivery

Teaching is organised in seven 20-credit modules and one 40-credit modules; each credit representing 10 hours of student effort. The relationship between class contact in the form of lectures, workshops, seminars, tutorials and student-centred learning in the form of individual and groupwork-based research and project/case studies 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.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology. You'll be taught how to use key software packages such as SketchUp and you'll have access to range of key databases from RICS, the Building Cost Information Service and Westlaw amongst others.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about

module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

- Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)
- Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
- Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)
- EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS)

Only the full Master's Degree (180-credits) is accredited by the RTPI and RICS.

In order to meet the RTPI's Assessment of Professional Competence requirements candidates must demonstrate that they have met the indicative learning outcomes detailed in the RTPI's Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education. This is achieved by passing all of the Compulsory modules with a mark of 50% or more.

In order to achieve a RICS-accredited degree a mark of at least 40% must be achieved in all modules (both Compulsory and Optional).

Assessment

Students will be assessed by a range of methods including individual and group assignments comprising applied problem solving, essays, reports, oral presentations, and projects. Examinations feature in some of the optional modules. Students will have the right to re-sit any module once. Normally examination and assignment re-sits will be in late August/early September. Any re-assessment in the Independent Study module would normally take place within one year.

Progression

Part-time and modular progression requirements – No specific requirements

Classification

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 Master's Degree

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Master's degree:

Award of a Master's degree

(i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 180 credits

(ii) a mark of 50% or more in at least 120 credits

(iii) no credits with a mark below 40%

In order to meet the requirements of RTPI and RICS accreditation, the following requirements must be met:

(i) a minimum of 50% (Pass) in all modules specified as 'Compulsory'.

(ii) a minimum of 40% in all other modules

In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Master's degree, the following **further** conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:

Distinction

[An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 180 credits

OR

an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 180 credits and marks of 70% in at least 90 credits]

[AND

Where the dissertation is included in the conditions for the award of a Master's degree, a mark of at least 60% in the dissertation]

AND

No marks below 40%.

Merit

[An overall weighted average of 60% or more over 180 credits

OR

an overall average of 58% or more over 180 credits and marks of 60% in at least 90 credits]

AND

No marks below 40%.

For Postgraduate Diploma

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma:

Award of a Postgraduate Diploma

- (i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 120 credits
- (ii) a mark of 50% or more in at least 80 credits
- (iii) no credits with a mark below 40%

Please note: the Diploma is **not** accredited by the RTPI or RICS

In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, the following further conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:

Distinction

[An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 120 credits

OR

an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 120 credits and marks of 70% in at least 60 credits]

AND

No marks below 40%.

Merit

[An overall weighted average of 60% or more over 120 credits

OR

an overall average of 58% or more over 120 credits and marks of 60% in at least 60 credits]

AND

No marks below 40%.

For Postgraduate Certificate

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate:

Award of a Postgraduate Certificate

- (i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 60 credits
- (ii) no credits with a mark below 40%.

Please note: the Postgraduate Certificate is **not** accredited by the RTPI or RICS.

Details of the classification method is given in detail in the [Assessment Handbook](#) under:

- Section 19: Awards: Postgraduate Master's, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate

Please note that there may be a specific version for your year of entry.

Additional costs of the programme

- Subsistence on five nights/six-day European Field Trip – approximately £180

- Subsistence on one night/two-day Domestic Field Trip - approximately £60
- Travel expenses for modular site visits – approximately £40
- Printing and binding expenses – approximately £20

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. Estimates were calculated in 2026.

Students may consider purchasing a laptop to help support their learning. Information on recommended device specifications can be found on the [DTS Student Hub](#).

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

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9 July 2026

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