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WESTMINSTER<sup>®</sup>

**Westminster Business School  
SCHOOL OF APPLIED MANAGEMENT**

## **POSTGRADUATE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME**



### **MSc Construction Project Management**

MSc Construction Commercial Management

MSc/Dip/Cert Building Information Management

# PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

## Course record information

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|--|---|
| Name and level of final award:                   | MSc Construction Project Management   |
|  | The MSc Construction Project Management is a Master degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible. |
| Name and level of intermediate awards:           | Postgraduate Diploma in Constructions Project Management<br>Postgraduate Certificate in Constructions Project Management      |
| Awarding body/institution:                       | University of Westminster   |
| Teaching Institution:                            | University of Westminster   |
| Status of awarding body/institution:             | Recognised Body   |
| Location of delivery:                            | Marylebone Campus   |
| Language of delivery and assessment:             | English   |
| Mode, length of study and normal starting month: | Part time (evening) and full time; blended learning   |
| Professional statutory or regulatory body:       | Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)<br>Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)<br>(Both subject to accreditation)  |
| Date of course validation/review:                | 2014  |
| Date of programme specification approval:        | 2014-15   |
| Course Leader:                                   | Malcolm Smith   |
| Course URL:                                      | <a href="http://westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate">westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate</a>                            |
| Westminster Course Code:                         | PMPOC03F (FT), PMPOC03P (PT)  |
| JACS code:                                       |   |
| UKPASS code:                                     | P09FPCPM (FT), P09EPCPM (PT)  |

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## Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum [entry requirements](#) for all postgraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: [westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply](http://westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply)

## Aims of the course

Project Management is a well-established discipline within the construction industry and is used on projects of all sizes and levels of complexity<sup>1</sup>. The project manager utilizes modern management skills, techniques, and systems to successfully deliver a project from inception to completion, to meet a client's requirements within the constraints of the external environment.

The MSc Construction Project Management is aimed at graduates who are already in construction-related employment and who aspire to senior positions in the field of project management. The programme aims to provide a challenging, stimulating and professionally relevant course of study which is directly related to the management of construction projects from inception to completion.

The design of the programme recognises the significant challenges of combining postgraduate-level study with full time professional employment. The programme aims to offer learners flexible access to the core content, whilst still providing the discipline and structure of regular attendance at the University. This is achieved through the use of a 'blended learning' approach.

Specifically, the programme aims to provide:

- A critical awareness of the importance of construction projects to clients and the context and constraints within which projects are undertaken.
- Knowledge and understanding of the theories, concepts, principles and techniques associated with the management of construction projects.
- High level intellectual and practical skills required for the successful delivery of projects from inception to completion.
- Experience in the planning and implementation of a personal research project related to construction project management and the subsequent writing up of research findings in a dissertation.
- Opportunities for personal and professional development and enhancement of lifelong learning skills within a structured framework.

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<sup>1</sup> Construction Industry Council Project Management <http://www.cic.org.uk/activities/projman.shtml>

## **Employment and further study opportunities**

The MSc Construction Project Management is aimed at graduates who are already in construction-related employment. The course has been designed to be professionally relevant and to produce Masters graduates who:

- are well rounded;
- can communicate with people at all levels;
- are adaptable;
- have inquiring minds;
- are critical thinkers;
- have good research skills;
- are innovative.

Thus, successful completion of the course should enhance graduates' career prospects and help them to achieve their aspirations of senior positions in the field of project management. Accreditation of the course by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Chartered Institute of Building (assuming accreditation is forthcoming) will enable graduates to pursue full professional membership of these bodies, and thereby further increase their qualifications and professional standing.

The attributes detailed above will also provide evidence of a commitment to lifelong learning and continuing professional development. Those wishing to continue their academic studies will have an excellent grounding for doctoral level research, or a career in academia.

The design of the course meets employers' expectations in terms of Masters graduates who have well developed intellectual skills and highly relevant professional knowledge and skills.

## **Learning outcomes**

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These threshold statements of achievement and are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

### Knowledge and understanding

On completion of the MSc Construction Project Management the learner is expected to:

- KU1 Have a critical awareness of the context within which construction projects are undertaken, with particular reference to the economic, financial, corporate and regulatory constraints.
- KU2 Have a critical awareness of the strategic importance of construction projects to client organisations and the positive contribution that project management can make in this context.
- KU3 Have an in-depth and systematic understanding of the theories, concepts and principles which underpin the effective management of construction projects.
- KU4 Have a comprehensive understanding of the techniques associated with the management of project resources, the control of project finances, the management

of risk and the management of people.

- KU5 Have a critical awareness of the concepts of corporate governance, ethics and sustainability as appropriate to a project manager operating in the construction industry.

### Specific skills

On completion of the MSc Construction Project Management the learner is expected to be able to:

- SS1 Break down complex project management problems, identify the relationship between the constituent parts, and effectively communicate the outcome. (Analysis)
- SS2 Combine information and ideas from a variety of traditional, contemporary and cutting-edge sources to develop innovative solutions to construction project management problems. (Synthesis)
- SS3 Critically evaluate evidence from both academic research and professional practice and demonstrate reasoning in the construction of arguments. (Evaluation)
- SS4 Utilise management skills, techniques, and systems to successfully deliver a project from inception to completion, whilst meeting the requirements of the client within the constraints of the external environment. (Technical expertise)
- SS5 Demonstrate initiative in the decision-making and problem-solving processes associated with complex and unpredictable situations typically encountered on construction projects. (Application)
- SS6 Demonstrate independence of thought and personal responsibility in the exercise of project management skills. (Autonomy)

### Key transferable skills

On completion of the MSc Construction Project Management the learner is expected to be able to:

- TS1 Communicate complex academic and professional ideas and concepts in written, graphical and oral formats as appropriate. Convey information clearly and succinctly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- TS2 Work effectively in a group, either as a leader or a group member. Use interpersonal skills to negotiate and prioritise group tasks, making optimum use of the capacities of group members. Deal confidently with tensions and conflict.
- TS3 Make use of a wide range of information sources and learning resources, including traditional library resources, web-based resources, software, electronic media and audio-visual resources. Manage the retrieval and organisation of information efficiently and effectively.
- TS4 Articulate research problems and design and implement appropriate research methodologies. Undertake the research process independently and competently.
- TS5 Take full responsibility for their own learning as independent and self-critical learners. Reflect on their academic and professional practice and demonstrate commitment to personal and professional development and the concept of lifelong learning.

## **Learning, teaching and assessment methods**

The approach to teaching, learning and assessment is founded on the principle of **blended learning** in which both the mode of delivery and the model of teaching and learning are blended.

### Learning & Teaching

#### **Blended mode of delivery**

The mode of delivery recognises the significant challenges of combining postgraduate-level study with full time professional employment. The blended learning approach adopted aims to combine some of the benefits of a traditional taught course, with the flexibility afforded by technology-enhanced delivery.

Web-based technology is fully exploited to ensure that students have flexible access to course materials and can interact with other students and with staff. The University's virtual learning environment (VLE), known as Blackboard, is the main platform through which students have access to course resources. Blackboard acts both as a repository for course materials and a gateway to various means of electronic interaction. The core material which forms the 'knowledge base' for the modules will be available electronically. This may take the form of electronic documents stored on Blackboard, and online lectures, including video lectures and presentations with voiceovers. Web-based technology is also exploited to enable students to interact with tutors and with other students in real time. Thus, online tutorials can be facilitated by academic staff with students in remote locations.

Students have access to a vast range of electronic resources via the University's library search engine. This enables students to access e-books, e-journals and a multitude of online databases from any location. Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, are also exploited to enable students to feel connected to the course without having to be physically present at the University.

The web-based delivery techniques outlined above provide students with great flexibility in the way in which they interact with their course. However, the programme is not a distance learning programme. Students will still be required to attend University regularly, but this will be limited to one evening per week during the teaching semesters. Since the core material of the course is delivered through web-based media, when students do attend the University there is no need for a systematic lecture programme. The face-to-face contact sessions with students are therefore used much more effectively for discussions, exercises, group work, tutorials, guest speakers and activities which actively engage the students in the learning process.

#### **Blended model of teaching and learning**

As with virtually all academic disciplines it is accepted that a basic knowledge of fundamental concepts and vocabulary has to be acquired by the student simply to communicate. In this course, students will acquire the basic knowledge primarily via the online resources referred to above, supplemented by their own personal research. However, the acquisition of that knowledge will not be adequate to develop in students the high level intellectual skills appropriate to a Masters level course. Hence, in the blended learning approach extensive use is made of a concept known as enquiry-based learning.

In the enquiry-based learning approach students actively engage with complex scenarios which are open-ended and allow a variety of responses or solutions. Students determine the lines of enquiry and the methods employed, and the enquiry requires students to draw on

existing knowledge and identify their required learning needs.

Tutors effectively act as facilitators providing guidance and encouragement to students. Students work collaboratively and use the extensive resources available to them to research the problems presented in the scenario. It is up to students to identify the key issues and the questions which need to be asked.

The learning process is thus highly student-centred, with the students effectively taking responsibility for what and how they learn. The scenarios are carefully designed so that there is no single correct answer and indeed, many alternative responses may be acceptable. Students gain a much deeper understanding of the material through their interaction with the scenario, and the knowledge they gain is more likely to be retained because it has been acquired by experience. Furthermore, their high level intellectual skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation are developed, as are the skills they need to tackle complex problems in real life.

### **Assessment**

Assessment for the course is based primarily on coursework. In some modules tests are used to confirm knowledge and understanding of core concepts. In modules where enquiry-based learning is used, the scenarios adopted will provide the vehicles for the coursework. For the dissertation module, the assessment is based on an individual piece of research conducted by the student and culminating in the submission of a dissertation.

In broad terms, the assessment strategies adopted on the course will require students to provide evidence of the following:

- Analysis – have key concepts been understood and the relationship between them articulated?
- Integration of theory and practice – has evidence from both academic research and professional practice been effectively related to each other, and have theoretical concepts been appropriately applied to practical situations?
- Critical thinking – has information been used in a critical way rather than simply reproduced and accepted as fact?

## Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value.

| Module code | Module title  | Status | UK credit | ECTS |
|-------------|---|--------|-----------|------|
| 7CNMN011W   | Procurement   | Core   | 20        | 10   |
| 7CNMN009W   | Economics of the Construction Industry                          | Core   | 20        | 10   |
| 7CNMN013W   | Risk Management for Projects                                    | Core   | 20        | 10   |
| 7CNMN007W   | Corporate Management  | Core   | 20        | 10   |
| 7CNMN004W   | Postgraduate Construction Dissertation or work related project. | Core   | 40        | 20   |
| 7CNMN012W   | Project Management Delivery                                     | Core   | 40        | 20   |
| 7CNMN006W   | Construction Project Planning                                   | Option | 20        | 10   |
| 7CNMN008W   | Developing Effective Project Teams                              | Option | 20        | 10   |
| 7CNMN001W   | Building Design Management                                      | Option | 20        | 10   |

Any other 20 credit (UK credits) Level 7 core module from the School of Applied Management can also be taken as an option module.

One option module to be taken.

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year.

## Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at [westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations](http://westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations)

## How will you be supported in your studies?

### Course Management

The MSc Construction Project Management course is managed by the Postgraduate Construction Programme Leader. The Postgraduate Construction Programme is located within the School of Applied Management, one of four schools in the Westminster Business School. The Programme Leader reports to the Head of School, who in turn reports to the Head of College.

### Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Faculty Registry Office. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard



where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students

## **Learning Support**

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students<sup>2</sup> can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

## **Support Services**

The University of Westminster Student Affairs department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University.

## **How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?**

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2009. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course is also monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from Course Committees, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. Each Faculty puts in to place an action plan. This may for example include making changes on the way the module is taught, assessed or even how the course is structured in order to improve the course, in such cases an approval process is in place.

A Course review takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with review panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years e.g. from Course Committees is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

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<sup>2</sup> Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

## How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through Course Committees students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to Committee to expressly represent the views of their peer. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.
- Each Faculty also has its own Faculty Student Forum with student representatives; this enables wider discussions across the Faculty. Student representatives are also represented on key Faculty and university committees.
- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.
- The University also has an annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey or PTES which helps us compare how we are doing with other institutions, to make changes that will improve what we do in future and to keep doing the things that you value.

Please note: This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.

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