

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	MA Urban Design The MA Urban Design is a Masters degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Postgraduate Diploma in Urban Design Postgraduate Certificate in Urban Design
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Marylebone Road
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	MA/PG Diploma Full time (one year) Or Part time (two years) PG Certificate Part time (one year)
QAA subject benchmarking group(s) :	
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	RTPO accreditation as a specialist planning degree. Urban Design Group: approved for recognised practitioner
Date of course validation/review:	November 2016
Date of programme specification approval:	Jan 2017
Valid for cohorts:	From 2017/18
Course Leader:	Bill Erickson
Course URL:	westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate
Westminster Course Code:	UPDPUPD
JACS code:	
UKPASS code:	004385 (MA) 045448 (PG Dip) 045446 (PG Cert)

Admissions requirements

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

westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply

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

Aims of the course

In an increasingly urbanised world, there is growing international demand for urban design graduates. These courses will equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to participate in this rapidly expanding profession. Urban design involves shaping the physical setting for life in cities. The pace of urban change, and the challenge of making cities efficient, sustainable and meaningful, demands creative solutions to design and management. The Urban Design courses at Westminster provide a coherent approach to issues that face our cities, combining structured academic study with live design projects, allowing you to develop practical skills, a theoretical understanding and an informed approach to sustainable urban development.

The programme addresses the needs of a range of individuals in the sector and is structured to allow a number of routes. The MA part time mode is most popular with those already working in the industry who are seeking to specialise in urban design. The full time mode is more appropriate for recent graduates or those changing careers. Urban Design Studio module is delivered in a range of attendance modes and can be taken with the Urban Design Summer School module forming an alternative route to the Postgraduate Certificate, which is particularly suitable for busy professionals who are looking for a practical introduction to urban design.

The specific objectives of the course are to enable students to:

- develop and enhance students' design skills at the urban scale.
- develop a critical approach to sustainable urban development and awareness of awareness of the different philosophies and theory of urbanism.
- establish a comprehensive understanding of the practice of urban design, its historic development as well as its social and economic context.
- understand the activities and products typical to urban design practice, to reflect upon and expand their own skill base
- work collaboratively and in an interdisciplinary context and identify their own role within an interdisciplinary profession.
- Consider, research, expand and document a specific urban design topic or issue in depth

The course strongly emphasises the importance of inter-disciplinary working. Professionals from a range of disciplines working together is seen as essential to creating sustainable communities. On some modules students are taught alongside international planning, planning and housing students, which gives students an understanding of the role of different disciplines and the experience of working collaboratively across disciplines.

Employment and further study opportunities

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

The course has a strong vocational focus and enjoys a good reputation within the industry. Employment prospects are excellent for full-time students graduating from this course. Part-time students are usually already employed and for them promotion and career enhancement follow soon after completion.

It is uncommon for graduates to move on to higher study but this course provides a good grounding for a small number have taken up research degrees

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

- A systematic understanding of and critical approach to current practice in urban design and sustainable development.
- A comprehensive knowledge of urban form and space; their quality, use, typologies and experience and
- A critical awareness of the different theoretical approaches to urban design upon which practising urban designers currently draw;
- Appropriate techniques in undertaking analysis, shaping the public realm, site and master planning, sustainable urban development and feasibility assessments
- The understanding of principal historic and cultural influences that have formed cities, especially in recent centuries and the emerging cultural practices that are transforming them
- The role of urban design in the development process and relation to legislative, financial, social and environmental context and the interaction with related disciplines

Specific skills

- Design process: analysing design problems, setting objectives, posit, visualise and evaluate spatial design propositions at an urban scale
- Design outputs: production of typical urban design products including site appraisal, context appraisal, capacity studies, frameworks, site briefs, design statements, masterplans, design guides and feasibility reports
- Theory: practical application of appropriate theory and precedent to urban design practice

- Survey, analyse and summarise urban form, activity, movement, meaning and context at differing scales
- Context: relate urban design objectives to current planning issues, including; development strategies, transport, conservation, inclusion, diversity and sustainability
- Evaluation, make reasoned assessment of; the financial feasibility, environmental performance and social benefit of propositions

Key transferable skills

- Design based problem solving involving creativity, innovation and critical evaluation based on reasoned application of theory and precedent
- Inter-disciplinary team working, negotiation, and collaborative working.
- Independent learning and enquiry
- Formulate, research, structure, and advance a reasoned argument
- Self-management, set targets, manage time and resources, work to deadlines and balance conflicting demands.
- Effective communication of ideas and information combining verbal, written, numeric and graphic media in a structured manner.
- Identify career aims and prepare a personal development plan.

Learning, teaching and assessment methods

Teaching combines lectures, seminars and workshops with individual and group tutorials. Assessment is 100% course work. Students are set a range of design problems common in practice and have experience of producing typical products such as site appraisal, context analysis, capacity studies, design frameworks, site briefs, design statements, masterplans, design guides and reports. Design tasks are balanced by a range of investigations into the physical, cultural, social, financial and sustainability issues influencing urban design practice allowing students to develop skills in research, analysis, communication, information, and interdisciplinary working.

The course delivery encourages reflective and critical thinking, helping students to extend existing skills and competencies. Projects are supported by individual tutorials and group seminars. Lecture series give background information together with structured reading. The dissertation/ major project gives students the space to study a topic in depth and develop research skills.

Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate MA students are expected to complete 180 credits in one academic year. Part time students will normally complete the 180 credits in two academic years. Students taking the PG Diploma take a total of 120 credits. The PG Certificate students take 60 credits in one year. The PG Certificate is offered in an alternative mode of attendance where students attend one day per month over a full year together with a 10 day summer school. The PG Diploma and the PG Certificate are also available as exit awards.

	semester 1	semester 2	summer
year 1 PT	Urbanism & Design (Core MA ,PgDip, & PGCert)	Option	
	Urban Design in Context (Core MA, PgDip, PgCert.)	Design and Development (Core MA, PgDip, PgCert.)	Summer school (option)
	Field Trip (MA & PgDip)		
year 2 PT	Sustainable Cities (Core MA & PgDip)	Master Planning (MA PgDip)	
	Research methods (Core MA)	Dissertation (Core MA)	
	Place and Experience (MA)		

Requirements for the course

Module code	Module title	Semester	Status	UK credit	ECTS
MA/PG Diploma Urban Design students take the following core for all students:					
7PLAN021W	Urban Design and Planning in Context	1	Core	20	10
7PLAN023W	Urban Design and Urban Development Process	2	Core	20	10
7PLAN027W	Urbanism and Design: Form, Context and Philosophies	1	Core	20	10
7PLAN019W	Sustainable Cities and Neighbourhoods	1	Core	20	10
7PLAN024W	Urban Design Field Trip*	1	Core	0	0
And take modules to the value of 40 credits from the following:					
7PLAN008W	Master Planning	2	Option	20	10
7PLAN025W	Urban Design Summer School	Summer	Option	20	10
7PLAN015W	Public Realm: Significance, Design, Experience	1	Option	20	10
7PLAN031W	Urban Information Management	1	Option	20	10
7PLAN004W	Extended Essay	2	Option	20	10
	Option module	2	Option	20	10
				Sub-total:	120 UK credits
MA Students only take in addition:					
7PLAN017W	Research Methods	1	Core (MA only)	10	5
7PLAN016W	Reflective Practice	1	Option (MA only)	10	5
7PLAN030W	Place and Experience	1	Option (MA only)	10	5
7PLAN002W	Dissertation / Major Project	2	Core (MA only)	40	20
				Total:	180 UK credits

NB: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one academic year.

* The Urban Design Field Trip is an important element of the course. It normally takes place in the first semester of the students' studies and introduces students to key skills and knowledge that are developed further and assessed in other modules.

PG Certificate Urban Design students take the following:

Module code	Module title	Semester	Status	UK credit	ECTS
7PLAN021W	Urban Design and Planning in Context	1	Core	20	10
7PLAN023W	Urban Design and Urban Development Process	2	Core	20	10
	Option module**	2	Option	20	10
				Total:	60 UK credits

** The PG Certificate option can be any 20 credit module from the MA in Urban Design; normally students take 7PLAN025W Urban Design Summer School.

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations

How will you be supported in your studies?

Course Management

The course is delivered by a small team of full- and part-time lecturing staff with assistance from part time visiting lecturers. One team member is designated as course leader, responsible for the day to day management of the course; at present this is Bill Erickson. The course team hold regular meetings to review the course structure, content and delivery as part of the annual monitoring process.

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. Students¹ 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 2006. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a

¹ Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

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.

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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