

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 Urban Design Postgraduate Certificate Urban Design
Awarding body/institution	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution	Recognised Body
Location of delivery	Marylebone
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month	One year, full time, September start. Two years, part time (day), September start.
QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements
Professional statutory or regulatory body	RTPI accreditation as a specialist planning degree. Urban Design Group: Approved for recognised practitioner
Date of course validation/Revalidation	April 2020
Date of programme specification approval	April 2020
Valid for cohorts	From 2020/21
Course Leader	David Mathewson
Course URL	westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate
Westminster course code	PMPLH03F MA Urban Design FT PMPLH03P MA Urban Design PT PDPLH03F (Postgraduate Diploma FT) PCPLH03P (Postgraduate Certificate PT) PDPLH03P Postgraduate Diploma Urban Design PT
HECoS code	100197 (Planning)
UKPASS code	004385 (MA) 045448 (Postgraduate Diploma) 045446 (Postgraduate Certificate)

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

Recognition of Prior Learning

Applicants with prior certificated or experiential learning at the same level of the qualification for which they wish to apply are advised to visit the following page for further information: westminster.ac.uk/recognition-of-prior-certified-learning.

Aims of the course

The MA Urban Design has been designed in response to an increasingly urbanised world, where there is growing international demand for urban design graduates. This course 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 course at Westminster provides a coherent approach to issues that face our cities, combining structured academic study with live design projects, allowing students to develop practical skills, a theoretical understanding and an informed approach to sustainable urban development.

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.

While it is more common for graduates in urban design to pursue careers in design practice, some do move on to higher study, and this course provides a good grounding for those students who have taken up research degrees. For those who do not, the Specialist accreditation from the RTPI (Royal Town Planning Institute), which, alongside the PG Certificate in Urban & Regional Planning (only available to MA Urban Design graduates of Westminster), allows for full professional membership of the RTPI following the sitting of the APC (Assessment of Professional Competence). Such graduates would be able to work as licensed planners, or for example as urban design officers

in a local authority.

Course 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.

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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 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 seeking to change careers.

The specific objectives of the course are to enable students to develop and enhance students' design skills at the urban scale.

- LO 1. Develop a critical analytical approach to the complexities and intricacies of sustainable urban development and a highly developed awareness of the different philosophies and theory of urbanism;
- LO 2. Establish a comprehensive, in-depth understanding of the practice of urban design, its development and relationship to spatial design as well as the related complex social and economic contexts;
- LO 3. Demonstrate an understanding of the professional activities and outputs typical to urban design practice, to critically reflect upon and expand their own skills base and professional competence;
- LO 4. Work independently, collaboratively and in an interdisciplinary context and identify their own role within an interdisciplinary profession; and
- LO 5. Consider, research, critically analyse, evaluate, expand and document a specific complex 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, or urban and regional planning colleagues, which provides students with an understanding of the role of different professional fields and the experience of working collaboratively across those disciplines.

Knowledge and understanding (KU)

- KU 1. Systematic understanding of and critical approach to current practice in urban design and sustainable development;
- KU 2. Key theoretical approaches to urban design and their impact;
- KU 3. Identification of the various cultural practices that shape and use the urban setting logically and at a global scale;
- KU 4. Analysis of the components of the city, the networks that connect them, the activities they support and how these relate to the design and regulatory process; and
- KU 5. The role of urban design practice within the multi-disciplinary nature of planning, development and management of sustainable cities.

Specific skills (SS)

- SS 1. Informed research and analysis of contemporary urban issues in specific complex locations;
- SS 2. Identification and application of appropriate theories and precedents of urban design practice;
- SS 3. Creative strategic responses balancing conflicting development pressures within a range of urban contexts;
- SS 4. Imaginative design solutions manipulating urban space and built elements to meet stated aims;
- SS 5. Generation of appropriate urban design products including site appraisal, contextual analysis, capacity studies, frameworks, briefs, design strategies, design statements, master plans, design guides and feasibility reports;
- SS 6. Assessment of the financial feasibility, environmental performance, ecological impact and social benefit of design propositions within the relevant legislative frameworks; and
- SS 7. Demonstration of the ability to communicate spatial design principles and propositions across a variety of media.

Key transferable skills (KTS)

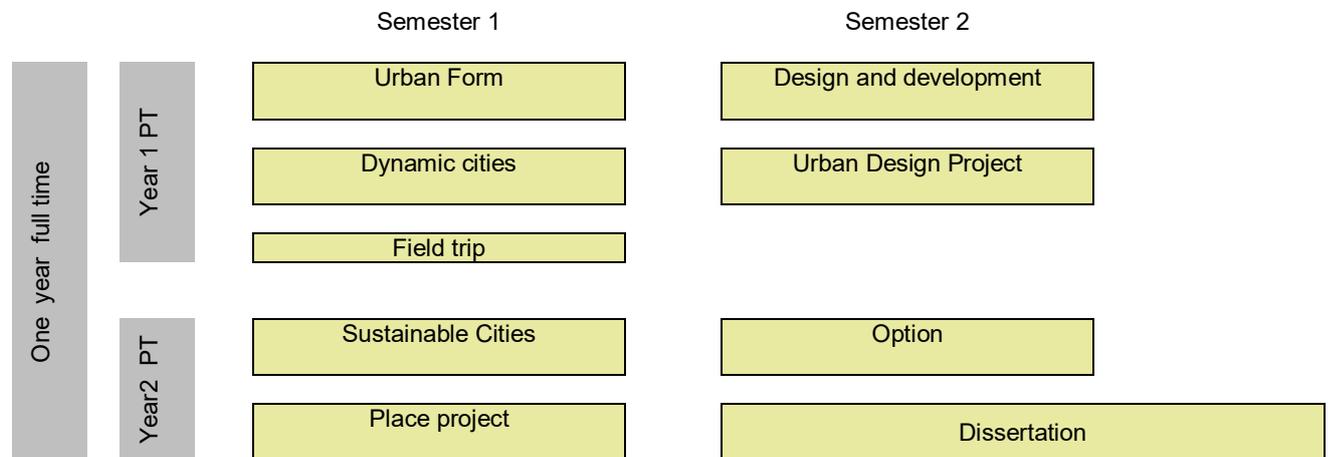
- KTS 1. Framing of problems in complex situations based on research and judgement;
- KTS 2. Generation of design-based propositions involving creativity, innovation and critical evaluation based on reasoned application of theories and precedents;
- KTS 3. Inter-disciplinary team working, negotiation and collaborative working;
- KTS 4. A critical understanding of how knowledge is advanced through structured enquiry;
- KTS 5. Demonstration of resilience and judgement through independent enquiry and critical reflection;
- KTS 6. Framing and advancing of a coherent original argument structured by enquiry and critical evaluation of evidence; and
- KTS 7. Managing complex work flows, setting of targets, managing time and resources, working to deadlines and balancing conflicting demands.

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, and 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 students study 180 credits per year.

Part time students will normally complete the 180 credits in two academic years. Students taking the Postgraduate Diploma take a total of 120 credits.

The Postgraduate Certificate students take 60 credits in one year.

The Postgraduate Diploma and the Postgraduate Certificate are also available as exit awards.

Requirements for the course

MA Urban Design and Postgraduate Diploma Urban Design core modules

Credit Level 7:				
MA Urban Design students take the following core modules for all students. Diploma students take all but the Dissertation module.				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
7PLAN0XXW	The Dynamic City: Urban Design and Planning in Context	Core	20	10
7PLAN0XXW	Urban Form and Growth	Core	20	10
7PLAN0XXW	Urban Design and Development Process	Core	20	10
7PLAN0XXW	Urban Design Project	Core	20	10
7PLAN0XXW	Place and experience in design of urban spaces	Core	20	10
7PLAN0XXW	Urban Design Field Trip*	Core	0	0
7PLAN019W	Sustainable Cities and Neighbourhoods	Core	20	10
			Subtotal: 120 UK credits for PG Dip	
			Subtotal: 120 UK credits for MA	

*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. **MA**

Urban Design Option modules (students choose ONE option module to take)

Credit Level 7:				
MA Urban Design students take the following option modules for all students.				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
7PLAN0XXW	Information Management Applications for Urban Planning	Option	20	10
7PLAN0XXW	Emerging landscapes and urban ecologies	Option	20	10
7PLAN029W	Environmental Policy, Assessment and Climate Change	Option	20	10
7PLAN0XXW	Conservation and Heritage	Option	20	10
7PLAN0XXW	Communities towards sustainability: Public engagement	Option	20	10
7PLAN0XXW	Housing & Regeneration	Option	20	10
7PLAN010W	Planning for Urban Risk and Resilience*	Option	20	10
7PLAN020W	Sustainable Neighbourhood Development and Management*	Option	20	10
7PLAN006W	International Spatial Planning Practice*	Option	20	10
7TRAN027W	Place, Space and Active Transport*	Option	20	10
7TRAN013W	Land Use Planning and Transport*	Option	20	10
7TOUR008W	Destination Development: Case Study Perspective	Option	20	10
			Subtotal: 120 UK credits for MA + 20 option UK credits	
			Subtotal: 140 UK credits for MA	

*Option or core modules from other courses suitable as options for MA Urban Design students. Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces may mean you cannot do your first choice of modules.

MA Urban Design Dissertation/Major Project module

Credit Level 7: MA students only take in addition the following module.				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
7PLAN02W	Dissertation / Major Project	Core	40	20
Total: 180 UK credits for MA				

Postgraduate Certificate Urban Design modules

Credit Level 7: Postgraduate Certificate Urban Design students take the following modules.				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
Postgraduate Certificate Urban Design students take the following:				
7PLAN0XXW	Urban Design and Development Process	Core	20	10
7PLAN0XXW	Urban Design Project	Core	20	10
7PLAN0XXW	ONE option module from list above or 7PLAN0XXW Urban Form and Growth or 7PLAN0XXW The Dynamic City: Urban Design and Planning in Context core modules	Option	20	10
Total: 60 UK credits				

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces may mean you cannot do your first choice of modules.

Professional Body Accreditation or other external references

The programme is accredited by the RTPI as a Specialist course. This is effectively half of the accreditation required for eligibility to take the APC (Assessment of Professional Competency) for full membership of the RTPI. The University offers a Postgraduate Certificate Urban and Regional Planning of 60 UK credits as a top-up course for MA Urban Design graduates to achieve full eligibility for the APC and subsequent full professional membership of the RTPI. See the MA Urban and Regional Planning course for details.

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations. In some cases course specific regulations may be applicable.

How will you be supported in your studies?

Course Management

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 Campus Registry. 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. Further information on Blackboard can be found at westminster.ac.uk/blackboard.

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. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development.

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 College. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student and Academic Services 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. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at westminster.ac.uk/student-advice. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University. Further information on UWSU can be found at westminster.ac.uk/students-union.

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

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2020. 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 College 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 evidence of student achievement, reports from external examiners in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course.

A Course revalidation 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 Revalidation panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years 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.

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

- Through student engagement activities at Course/Module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Course representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the course representatives.
- There are also School Representatives appointed jointly by the University and the Students' Union who meet with senior School staff to discuss wider issues affecting student experience across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College 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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