

1	Awarding Institution	University of Newcastle upon Tyne
2	Teaching Institution	As above
3	Final Award	MSc Town Planning Postgraduate Diploma Spatial Planning
4	Programme title	As above
5	Programme Accredited by:	Royal Town Planning Institute
6	UCAS Code	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s)	None as yet
8	Date of production/revision	November 2003

9 Programme Aims:

1. to equip students with a broad understanding of town planning that enables them to grasp the theoretical foundations of the discipline and the linkages between theory and practice
2. to develop both transferable and professional skills
3. to develop research skills
4. to develop an understanding of the values and ethics of working as a professional
5. to enable students to develop depth of knowledge and/or skills in particular areas of town planning, underpinned by current and relevant research
6. to meet the professional requirements of the Royal Town Planning Institute (MSc as a 'combined programme', Postgraduate Diploma as 'spatial planning programme')
7. to meet the criteria for Postgraduate Diploma and Masters level qualifications as laid down in the QAA's National Qualifications Framework
8. to comply with University policy and QAA Codes of Practice

10(a) Programme Intended Learning Outcomes:

A Knowledge and understanding

1. Demonstrate understanding and critical thinking of planning as a form of action concerned with managing and creating space and place
2. Evaluate arguments for planning as a form of action within processes of change
3. Demonstrate an understanding of planning as a social science discipline and as a discipline that integrates concern with design and place, economic issues relating to development, environmental challenges and legal and institutional frameworks
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the political nature of decision-making in planning and the significance of diversity issues, stakeholder involvement and rights in the planning process

5. Demonstrate an understanding of the complexities of planning issues and problems and be able to integrate different areas of the curriculum
6. Demonstrate an understanding of theory and make appropriate connections between theory and practice.
7. Demonstrate a critical understanding of values, ethics and professionalism in planning
8. Demonstrate depth of knowledge in selected areas of planning

B Subject-specific/professional skills

1. Formulate and propose cogent policies, strategies and course of action as responses to planning problems
2. Evaluate and effectively utilise a variety of plan and policy making methods and processes

C Cognitive skills

1. Define and analyse problems effectively and appropriately
2. Make effective use of evidence and information
3. Articulate reasoned arguments
4. Develop research skills and experience in the context of the school's research interests

D Key (transferable) skills

1. Effectively and fluently communicate information, ideas, principles, arguments and proposals through written, graphic, oral and electronic means, and demonstrate effectively, written, numeracy, oral, IT and information literacy skills.
2. Work effectively individually and in groups
3. Develop personal self-management skills such as setting priorities and time management

10(b) Programme Intended Learning Outcomes:

Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies

A Knowledge and understanding

The primary means of conveying knowledge and understanding is through lectures (A 1-8). The general use of 2 hour teaching blocks enables these lectures to be interactive and often in workshop mode. In addition there is a strong emphasis on presentations through seminar presentations either singly or in groups. (A1, 4, 6, 7 & 8) and A2, 5 & 8 are taught partly through project work with students working on specific planning problems. Throughout the programmes the students are expected to supplement their classroom work with independent reading. The programme is mostly supported with material on Blackboard. In attaining A2, 3, 5 & 8 MSc students undertake independent research with appropriate supervision from staff

B Subject-specific/professional skills

Subject specific skills are introduced and developed through project work where students work in teams to problems solve and present ideas for action (B1 & B2). Students are encouraged and expected to undertake field-work to develop their skills.

C Cognitive skills

Cognitive skills are developed through research projects (C1 & 4); supervisions (C1, 3 & 4); group project work (C2); and teaching of statistical packages (C2). MSc students are expected to undertake independent research having framed their own research questions. The emphasis in cognitive skill development is to learn by doing.

D Key (transferable) skills

Transferable skills are well embedded in the programme and are taught and developed in seminars, project work, and training in statistical packages (D1, 2 & 3). In addition the ability to work effectively in groups is developed through project work and seminars. This development of transferable skills is encouraged through course work (D1, 2 & 3) and through group activities such as project work and field trips.

**10(c) Programme Intended
Learning Outcomes:**

**Assessment Strategy
and Methods**

A Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge and understanding of subject are tested in a variety of ways. Generally these are assessed through course work or written examination (A1–8). In most cases there is one major assessment (coursework or examination) per module. This is sometimes supported by a minor assessment (e.g. presentation). Course work tests ability to research and reflect on material often gained largely in private study while examinations test ability to bring together material from the whole module in succinct arguments.

B Subject-specific/professional skills

These skills are tested in project work presentations and coursework.

C Cognitive skills

Cognitive skills C1–4 are largely assessed through course work including essays and reports (C1 & 2), the production of a research outline and dissertation (C4) (MSc students only), project work based on field work (C4); group presentations (C2); seminar papers (C3). C3 is also tested by written examination.

D Key (transferable) skills

Assessed by examination, essay writing, report writing, seminar papers, application of statistical tests to problems, dissertation. D2 is assessed through project work (including peer evaluation of group projects) and group presentations.

11 Programme Curriculum, Structure, and Features:

The MSc Town Planning is a 180 credit, 12 month programme. The Postgraduate Diploma has the same taught components but omits the dissertation. Both can be undertaken on a part-time basis over a minimum of 24 or 21 months for MSc and Postgraduate Diploma respectively.

The programme aims to both build core knowledge and skills and spatial planning and specialist planning knowledge and skills in selected area(s) of study. The latter is emphasised in the MSc with the inclusion of a 60 credit dissertation.

The majority of the programme consists of a series of compulsory modules, to meet the professional requirements of the Royal Town Planning Institute. Knowledge and skills are developed through a series of 10 credit lecture based courses which outline the nature of the planning system and its institutions, the shaping theories of planning and the workings of the land market, reflection upon values and ethics, research skills, as well as introducing some key policy areas such as infrastructure and mobility. 20 credit project-based modules bring this knowledge together and apply it at a variety of spatial scales as well as building the full range of skills.

The other key strand of the programme is the development of specialist planning knowledge and skills in selected area(s) of study. In semester one students have a choice of 10 credits of lecture-based module which introduces their chosen area of study. In semester 2 they are able to develop this with a further choice over a 10 credit individual project-based module. A further key part of specialisation for MSc students is the 60 credit Dissertation.

The Postgraduate Diploma, as well as standing as a free-standing qualification, is designed to link to specialist Masters programmes within the School and University to together form a 'combined' route for RTPI accreditation purposes.

Compulsory Modules

Code	Credits	Descriptive title	
TCP721	(20)	Spatial Strategies	
TCP723	(10)	Land Economics	
TCP801	(10)	Planning Frameworks	
TCP810	(10)	Planning Theory	
TCP899	(60)	Dissertation	(MSc only)
TCP902	(10)	The Reflective Practitioner	
TCP905	(10)	Infrastructure, Mobility and Society	
TCP910	(20)	Sustainable Communities	
TCP911	(10)	Evaluation, Analysis and Research	

Optional Modules

Either

TCP724 (10) Urban Design and Conservation

Followed by

TCP912 (10) Urban Design and Conservation Project

Or

TCP917 (10) Regenerating Places

Followed by

TCP918 (10) Regenerating Places Project

Information on the programming of these modules can be found in the programme handbook.

12 Criteria for Admission:

- a) applicants who hold an Honours degree from this or another recognised University or awarding body;
- b) applicants who hold the Diploma in Town Planning or Diploma in Town Planning (Urban Conservation) from this University (to complete only the dissertation).
- c) holders of other relevant qualifications (by agreement with the Dean of Postgraduate Studies)

For candidates in category (a) an interview is not required but applicants are encouraged to visit the School. Candidates in category (c) would be interviewed wherever possible.

13 Support for Students and their Learning:

Induction

At the start of their studies students are inducted into the University, the School, their programme and the city. This is combined with social events for students to get to know each other and staff.

Study skills support

Support is given on a case by case basis.

Academic support

Academic staff encourage all students to make appointments to discuss their work or to discuss via e mail. MSc students typically meet with their dissertation

supervisor on a fortnightly basis to discuss progress. Certain other elements of the programme e.g. projects are run with intensive contact between staff and students.

Pastoral support

The personal tutor system is carried out by year co-ordinators who meet with all their students at least twice a year. The first meeting in semester 1 focuses on settling in and the second on talking through semester 1 results and issues arising at that stage in semester 2 and to reflect on future choices. In addition academic staff encourage students to talk through their problems whether personal or academic. Students are referred to the Student Counselling Service where appropriate.

Support for Special Needs

The University and the School is committed to developing an environment in which students with disabilities can pursue their intellectual and personal development with appropriate central and departmental support services. It is the policy of the University that all applicants for programmes of study are considered first and foremost on grounds of academic and individual merit and, in respect of applicants who are disabled, every possible effort is made to overcome any factors which might prevent them from undertaking a programme of study or research for which they have been approved under normal admissions arrangements. This policy is made clear to potential applicants in the university Prospectuses.

The University has a Disability Support Service that is a centre offering advice, guidance and support for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The Service is headed by the Disability Officer and has a Dyslexia Adviser, a Co-ordinator for Deaf Students and a Technical Support Adviser. The Service has a technical resources room with specialist equipment for the use of students and for assessment purposes. The Disability Support Service also provides advice and guidance to all university staff to promote effective disability awareness and support for students.

Learning resources

APL library materials are effectively and coherently managed by the Robinson Library.

Student computer services are provided by UCS through the campus wide provision of clusters of networked PCs or workstations.

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning:

Modules and programmes are kept under review through a series of mechanisms:

- a) Reflections of module leaders and meetings of teaching staff/ programme management team
- b) Student evaluation a summary of which, included proposed changes, is presented to the Board of Studies. Results of student evaluations are reported and displayed in studios.
- c) Staff Student Committee
- d) Year group meetings
- e) External examiner reports. As is common practice on RTPI accredited programmes there are two external examiners, one academic, one practitioner.
- f) Faculty & University reviews
- g) Professional accreditation.
- h) Annual Planning Advisory Group composed of regional practitioners.

15 Regulation of Assessment

Pass Marks

50% for all modules

Course Requirements

All modules must be passed. One resubmission per failed module is allowed.

Qualification award

The final degree award of MSc Town Planning is based on the average weighted mark on all modules. It may be passed with Distinction or Merit.

Mark	Degree category
70	Distinction
60-69	Merit
50-59	Pass
less than 50	Fail

Candidates are awarded a Pass in the Postgraduate Diploma in Spatial Planning if their average weighted mark is 50 or more.

Role of the External Examiner

External examiners are appointed by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. One is a distinguished academic and one a senior planning practitioner. The role of the examiner is to act as a moderator of standards, attend the Examination Board and to report to the University.

16 Indicators of Quality and Standards:

RAE Grade 5 (2001)

TQA 21 points (1997)

RTPI quinquennial recognition (last full visit 1998; mini-Board 2003 pending new arrangements from summer 2004))

High employability on previous Master of Town planning qualification as evidenced by e.g. 1st destination statistics

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

In addition, information relating to the course is provided in:

The University Prospectus

The Departmental Prospectus

The University and Degree Programme Regulations

The Degree Programme Handbook

QAA Subject Review Report