

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MSc/PG Dip
4	Programme Title	MSc Town Planning Postgraduate Diploma Spatial Planning
5	UCAS/Programme Code	5109 / 3393
6	Programme Accreditation	Royal Town Planning Institute Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	7
9	Date written/revised	May 2017

10 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 intellectual, transferable and professional skills
3. To develop advanced research skills and the ability to critically evaluate and utilise current research
4. To critically engage with the complexity of decision making in the discipline and to demonstrate how the values and ethics of working as a professional planner inform sound judgements
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 Level 7 qualifications as laid down in the FHEQ
8. To comply with University policy and the QAA Quality Code

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for Planning.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1. Demonstrate understanding of planning as a process concerned with managing and creating space and place
- A2. Demonstrate an understanding of planning as a social science discipline and as a discipline that integrates design and place, economic issues relating to development, environmental challenges and legal and institutional frameworks

- A3. 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
- A4. Demonstrate an understanding of the complexities of planning issues and problems and be able to integrate different areas of the curriculum
- A5. Demonstrate an understanding of theory and make appropriate connections between theory and practice.
- A6. Demonstrate an understanding of the complexities of sustainable development and the relationship between social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects of sustainability and be able to identify the planner's role on supporting sustainability agendas
- A7. Demonstrate depth of knowledge in selected areas of planning

Teaching and Learning Methods

Intended Learning Outcome	Teaching Method	Enabling and Encouragement
A1	Lectures	Independent reading
A2	Lectures, field trips	Independent reading and research
A3	Lectures, case studies	Engagement with professional practice
A4	Lectures, group consultancy focused project	Engagement from external planning consultancy Site visits
A5	Lectures	Independent reading, group student seminar preparation
A6	Lectures, field trip, independent study group project	Tutorials, Field study tour and group work support materials
A7	Lectures, project	Independent research, case studies, field trips

Assessment Strategy

Intended Learning Outcome	If assessed	Method of assessment
A1	Yes	Assessed Essays
A2	Yes	Assessed Essays, Group project reports
A3	Yes	Assessed Essay, student seminar presentation and paper
A4	Yes	Assessed Group project reports and presentations
A5	Yes	Assessed Essay
A6	Yes	Assessed Group project report
A7	Yes	Assessed Essay, Project reports, and for MSc Dissertation

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1. Critically evaluate arguments within planning and for planning as a processes for managing change
- B2. Demonstrate an ability to critically analyse values and ethics in planning

Teaching and Learning Methods

Intended Learning Outcome	Teaching Method	Enabling and Encouragement
B1	Lectures, student seminars	Independent reading, seminar preparation
B2	Lectures, student led seminars	Independent reading, seminar preparation
Assessment Strategy		
Intended Learning Outcome	If assessed	Method of assessment
B1	Yes	Assessed Essays
B2	Yes	Assessed Essays
Practical Skills		
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to:</p> <p>C1 Formulate and propose cogent policies, strategies and course of action as responses to planning problems</p> <p>C2 Evaluate and effectively utilise a variety of plan and policy making methods and processes</p> <p>C3 Identify appropriate methods for planning oriented research</p>		
Teaching and Learning Methods		
Intended Learning Outcome	Teaching Method	Enabling and Encouragement
C1	Lectures, Group Spatial strategy project, field visits, practitioner engagement	Independent reading, independent site visits
C2	Lectures, Group Spatial strategy project	Independent reading and research, provision of example documentation
C3	Lectures, case studies, Development of research proposal	Engagement with professional practice, provision of example practice oriented research
Assessment Strategy		
Intended Learning Outcome	If assessed	Method of assessment
C1	Yes	Assessed Group project presentation and report
C2	Yes	Assessed Group project presentation and report
C3	Yes	Assessed group project report, Assessed individual research proposal, and for MSc students Dissertation
Transferable/Key Skills		
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to:</p> <p>D1 Work effectively alone and in a team</p> <p>D2 Take responsibility for his /her own time management, learning and professional development</p> <p>D3 Communicate ideas and concepts clearly in a range of formats</p>		
Teaching and Learning Methods		

Intended Learning Outcome	Teaching Method	Enabling and Encouragement
D1	Lecture, individual projects, Student led group seminars Group Spatial strategy project, Post graduate study skills	Gradually increasing group work prior to group projects
D2	Post graduate study skills	Independent reading and research, provision of example documentation
D3	Lectures, case studies, Development of research proposal	Engagement with professional practice, provision of example practice oriented research

Assessment Strategy

Intended Learning Outcome	If assessed	Method of assessment
D1	Yes	Sole authored essays and individual reading; Group work (management and allocation of tasks) and assessed group authored project work
D2	No	
D3	Yes	Assessed sole authored academic essays, individual and group practice focused project report, individual research proposal, dissertation

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

The programme aims to build core knowledge and skills and spatial planning and specialist planning knowledge and skills in selected area(s) of study. The MSc programme consists of 180 credits of study, the PgDip 120 credits of study (PgDip students do not complete the Dissertation module worth 60 credits).

The majority of the programme consists of a series of compulsory modules, to meet the professional requirements of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors: planning and development specialist area of surveying. 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 sustainable development and issues such as stakeholder participation. Two 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 a selected area of study. Students follow a 20 credit option route over semesters 1 and 2; semester 1 accounts for 10 credits and provides the foundation for the specialism through lectures and semester 2 accounts for a further 10 credits where students with tutorial support develop and research a small individual project. A further key part of specialisation for MSc students only is the 60 credit Dissertation on a planning related topic of their own choosing.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

The Programme is accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The Programme allows the students to develop their interests in a specialist area of planning. Optional modules are strongly linked to the Schools research strengths. High level of extra-curricular support and development (essay writing skills, Dissertation support, student and staff seminars, involvement of practitioners).

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2017-2018/documents/51093393programmeregulationsv4.pdf>

14 Support for Student Learning

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <https://my.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

Induction

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principal support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

Study skills support

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Development Centre (further information is available from the Robinson Library).

Academic and Pastoral support

Each undergraduate and taught postgraduate student will be assigned a personal tutor.*

A personal tutor is one part of a wider network of advice and guidance available to students to support their personal and general academic development. The module leader acts as the first point of contact for subject-specific academic advice. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Student-Staff Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies. Within the academic unit, students may also receive additional academic and pastoral advice from a range of other student-facing staff including degree programme directors, dissertation/project supervisors, and administrative support staff.

*Arrangements may vary for students taking special types of provision.

The University also offers a wide range of institutional services and support upon which students can call, such as the Writing Development Centre, Careers Service and Student Wellbeing Service. This includes one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Student Union operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

Support for students with disabilities

The University's Disability Support team provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

Learning resources

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and the University's IT Service (NUIT), which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an

Erasmus exchange.

15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Module reviews

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Student-Staff Committee and/or the Board of Studies. The introduction of new modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (FLTSEC).

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to FLTSEC. The FLTSEC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the Taught Programmes Sub-Committee.

External Examiner reports

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. External Examiner reports and the response to the External Examiner from the Board of Studies are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Student-Staff Committee.

Student evaluations

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review through online questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Student-Staff Committee, and the Board of Studies. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

Feedback is channelled via the Student- Staff Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

Every six years degree programmes in each subject area undergo Learning and Teaching Review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a review visit by a review team (normally one day in duration) which includes an external subject specialist and a student representative. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

Accreditation reports

The Programme reports annually to the Royal Town Planning Institute's Partnership Panel

Additional mechanisms

None

16 Regulation of assessment

Please refer to the Postgraduate (Taught) Examination Conventions at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/2017>

Role of the External Examiner

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by the University following recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is required to:

- i. confirm whether the standards of the University's awards meet or exceed the academic standards specified in external reference points such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, the UK Quality Code, subject benchmark statements, and, where appropriate, the requirements of

- professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;
- ii. confirm whether the academic standards of the University's awards are consistent with those of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions;
 - iii. report on whether the University's processes for assessment measure student achievement rigorously and fairly and are conducted in line with University policies and regulations;
 - iv. identify, where appropriate, examples of exemplary practice and innovation in learning, teaching and assessment;
 - v. comment on opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning experience provided to students.

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

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/>

The University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

Please note. 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.