

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	BA Hons
4	Programme Title	Town and Country Planning
5	UCAS/Programme Code	K400
6	Programme Accreditation	Royal Town Planning Institute
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Town and Country Planning
8	FHEQ Level	6
9	Date written/revised	May 2011

10 Programme Aims

The aims of the programme are:

- To provide a broad applied social science training that equips students with a coherent understanding of planning and an appreciation of the links between theory and practice.
- To meet the professional learning outcomes specified for spatial planning programmes by the Royal Town Planning Institute and centred on:
 - developing techniques of analysis and enquiry appropriate to finding solutions to planning problems ;
 - developing an appreciation of the professional roles and responsibilities of planners in society.
- To employ Newcastle and the North East Region as a living example for planning students, building on the School's wider regional engagement.
- To equip students to proceed to the final stages of the RTPI accredited programme (Diploma in Town Planning or one of 3 specialised masters programmes) and then into professional practice or a research career.
- To equip students who choose not to complete their professional accreditation with a range of transferrable skills appropriate to the graduate job market (the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility; decision making in complex and unpredictable contexts; and the learning ability needed to undertake further professional training).

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 (subject) (X).

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1 Demonstrate understanding and insight in the subject and be able to make connections between different areas of the curriculum
- A2 Evaluate arguments for planning as a form of action within processes for change.
- A3 Evaluate political, legal, institutional and administrative frameworks and procedures in planning.
- A4 Demonstrate an understanding of the complexities of planning issues and problems.
- A5 Demonstrate an understanding of theory and make appropriate connections between theory and practice.
- A6 Demonstrate a critical understanding of values and ethics in planning.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary means of conveying knowledge and understanding is through lectures (A1-6). The large scale 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, 3 and 6) and A4 is taught partly through project work with students working on specific planning problems. Throughout the course the students are expected to supplement their classroom work with independent reading. In addition, the undergraduate programme is now almost wholly supported with material on Blackboard. In attaining A3 and 4, students undertake independent research with regular supervisions from staff.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding of subject are tested in a variety of ways. Generally these are assessed through course work or unseen written examination (A1-6) but not both. Course work tests ability to research and reflect on material often gained largely in private study, while unseen examinations test ability to bring together material from the whole module in succinct arguments.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 Define and analyse problems effectively and appropriately.
- B2 Develop research skills and experience in the context of the School's research interests.
- B3 Make effective use of evidence and information.
- B4 Articulate reasoned arguments.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Intellectual skills are developed through research projects (B1 and 2); supervisions (B1, 2 and 4); group project work (B3); teaching of statistical packages (B3) and study skills sessions. Students are expected to undertake independent research having framed their own research questions. The emphasis in cognitive skill development is to learn by doing.

Assessment Strategy

Cognitive skills B1-4 are largely assessed through course work including essays and reports (B1 and 3), the production of a research outline, dissertation (B2), project work based on field work (B2); group presentations (B3); seminar papers (B4). B4 is also tested in the junior years particularly by unseen written examination.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1 Formulate and propose cogent policies, strategies and courses of action as responses to planning problems.
- C2 Evaluate and effectively utilise a variety of plan and policy making methods and processes.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Practical subject-specific skills are introduced and developed through project work where students work in teams to problem solve and to present ideas for action. Students are encouraged and expected to undertake field-work to develop their skills.

Assessment Strategy

These skills are tested in project work presentations.

Transferable/Key Skills
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to:</p> <p>D1 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 literacy skills.</p> <p>D2 Work effectively individually and in groups.</p>
Teaching and Learning Methods
<p>Transferable skills are well embedded in the programme and are taught and developed in seminars, project work, training in statistical packages and study skills group tutorials (D1 and 2). In addition, the ability to work effectively in groups is developed through project work in the junior years of the programme and through seminars in third year. This development of transferable skills is encouraged through course work (D1 and 2) and through group activities such as project work and field trips.</p>
Assessment Strategy
<p>Assessed by unseen examination, essay writing, report writing, seminar papers, application of statistical tests to problems and dissertation. D2 is assessed through project work and group presentations.</p>

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme
See Annex 2
Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)
Vocational degree which covers a wide range of issues affecting town planning
Programme regulations (link to on-line version)
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/

13 Criteria for admission
<i>Entry qualifications</i>
<p>GCSEs required - Candidates are expected to have GCSE Maths A-Level Subjects and Grades – Candidates are expected to have achieved BBC from “A” level examinations. Scottish Highers - Candidates with Scottish Highers should have achieved BBBB and combinations of Highers and Advanced Highers are accepted</p>
<i>Admissions policy/selection tools</i>
All students who are offered a place will be invited to a University and School Open Day.
<i>Non-standard Entry Requirements</i>
Where practicable, the student would be interviewed prior to being offered a place.
<i>Additional Requirements</i>
None

Level of English Language capability

Overseas students are expected to provide evidence of their competence in the use of English

14 Support for Student Learning

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 principle 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.

Help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre.

Academic support

The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. In addition the University offers a range of support services, including one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions/workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues eg. 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 Union Society 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 Service 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 Information Systems and Services, 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 School Teaching and Learning Committee and at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

External Examiner reports

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

Student evaluations

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking the students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching in their HEIs. With reference to the outcomes of the NSS and institutional student satisfaction surveys actions are taken at all appropriate levels by the institution.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

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

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process. Every five years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a two-day review visit by a review team which includes an external subject specialist in addition to University and Faculty representatives. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Teaching and Learning Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further five year period.

Accreditation reports

The degree is accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute and is evaluated annually within a two day 'Partnership' meeting.

Additional mechanisms

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 40 (Undergraduate programmes)

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Undergraduate Progress Regulations and Undergraduate Examination Conventions. In summary, students must pass, or be deemed to have passed, 120 credits at each Stage. . All first and second year modules are 'core' and as such need to be passed in order to proceed into the next stage. There are resit opportunities, with certain restrictions.

Weighting of stages

Stage 2 modules will contribute at a weighting of 33% towards Honours performance, whilst Stage 3 modules will contribute at a weighting of 66%.

Common Marking Scheme

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Undergraduate Examination Conventions, namely

	Modules used for degree classification (DC)	Modules not used for degree classification
<40	Fail	Failing
40-49	Third Class	Basic
50-59	Second Class, Second Division	Good
60-69	Second Class, First Division	Very Good
70+	First Class	Excellent

Role of the External Examiner

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies.

The External Examiner is expected to:

- See and approve examination papers
- Moderate examination and coursework marking
- Attend the Board of Examiners
- Report to the University on the standards of the programme

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

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/>)

The School Brochure (contact enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/>)

The Degree Programme Handbook – sent to all students electronically

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. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Module	Type	Intended Learning Outcomes			
		A	B	C	D
TCP1003	Compulsory		2,3,4		1
TCP1014	Compulsory	1,2,3,4,5	4	2	1
TCP1017	Compulsory	1,2,3,4,5	4	2	1
TCP1018	Compulsory	1,2,4,5	1,4	1	1
TCP1019	Compulsory	1,4,5	3,4		1
TCP1020	Compulsory	1,4	1,4		1
TCP1022	Compulsory	1,4,5	4		1
TCP1023	Compulsory	1,4	1,2,3,4	1,2	1
TCP1024	Compulsory	1,2,4	1,2,3,4	1,2	1,2
TCP1025	Compulsory	1,2,4	1,2,3,4	1,2	1,2
TCP1026	Compulsory	1,2,4,6	1,3,4	1	1
TCP2018	Compulsory	1,2,3,4	1,4		1
TCP2023	Compulsory	1,2,4,5,6	1,4		1
TCP2025	Compulsory	1,2,4	1,2,3,4	1,2	1
TCP2027	Compulsory	1,5,6	1,2,3,4		1
TCP2005	Optional	1,2,4,5,6	1,4		1
TCP2006	Optional	1,2,4,5	1,4	2	1,2
TCP2022	Optional	1,2,4,5,6	1,4		1
TCP2028	Optional	1,4,5	1,4		1
TCP3003	Compulsory	1,2,3,5,6	4	2	1,2
TCP3019	Compulsory	1,4,5,6	1,4		1
TCP3051	Compulsory	3,4,6	1,4	2	1
TCP3049	Compulsory	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,3,4	1,2	1,2
TCP3050	Compulsory	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,2,3,4	1,2	1,2
TCP3099	Compulsory	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,2,3,4	1,2	1

Annex 2

1. Stage 1

(a) Unless otherwise stated all modules are core.

(b) All candidates shall take the following compulsory and core modules:

<i>Code</i>	<i>Descriptive title</i>	<i>Total Credits</i>	<i>Credits Sem 1</i>	<i>Credits Sem 2</i>
TCP1003	Planning Skills	(10)	(10)	
TCP1014	Planning Processes	(10)		(10)
TCP1017	Shaping Towns and Cities	(10)	(10)	
TCP1018	Design Awareness and Communication	(10)	(10)	
TCP1019	Economics of Development I	(10)		(10)
TCP1020	Environment and Sustainability	(10)		(10)
TCP1023	Geographical Information Systems	(10)		(10)
TCP1024	Reading the City	(10)	(10)	
TCP1025	Social Worlds	(20)	(20)	
TCP1026	Understanding Place – Methods and Perspectives			(20)

2. Stage 2

(a) All Stage 2 modules are Honours modules.

(b) All candidates shall take the following compulsory and core modules:

<i>Code</i>	<i>Descriptive title</i>	<i>Total Credits</i>	<i>Credits Sem 1</i>	<i>Credits Sem 2</i>
TCP2018	European Planning Study	(20)		(20)
TCP2023	Understanding Sustainable Development	(20)		(20)
TCP2025	Researching local economies	(20)	(20)	
TCP2027	Research Skills	(20)		(20)

(c) All candidates will select two from the following core modules:

<i>Code</i>	<i>Descriptive title</i>	<i>Total Credits</i>	<i>Credits Sem 1</i>	<i>Credits Sem 2</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Type</i>
TCP2005	Housing Policy	(20)	(20)		6	
TCP2006	Design & Neighbourhood	(20)	(20)		6	
TCP2022	Regeneration and Place	(20)	(20)		6	
TCP2028	Understanding Cities	(20)	(20)		6	

3. Stage 3

(a) All candidates shall take the following compulsory modules:

<i>Code</i>	<i>Descriptive title</i>	<i>Total Credits</i>	<i>Credits Sem 1</i>	<i>Credits Sem 2</i>
TCP3003	Employment & Professional Practice	(10)	(10)	
TCP3019	Planning Theory and Policy Analysis	(10)	(10)	
TCP3051	Development Management	(10)	(10)	
TCP3049	Planning Strategies	(20)	(20)	
TCP3050	Strategies into Action	(30)		(30)
TCP3099	Dissertation	(40)	(10)	(30)