

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

### MA Environmental and Spatial Planning

**NOTE:** This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detail on the specific learning outcomes, indicative content and the teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found

(1) In the Module Specification Handbook, and

(2) In the Student Handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked within independent review processes undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency.

The information from this specification may be selectively extracted and included in documents that are more appropriate for students, intending students and employers.

<b>1</b>	<b>Awarding Institution / Body:</b>	Birmingham City University
<b>2</b>	<b>Teaching Institution:</b>	Birmingham City University
<b>3</b>	<b>Programme accredited by:</b>	RTPI
<b>4</b>	<b>Final Award:</b>	MA
<b>5</b>	<b>Programme Title:</b>	MA Environmental and Spatial Planning
<b>6</b>	<b>UCAS Code:</b>	Not applicable
<b>7</b>	<b>QAA Benchmarking Group:</b>	There are no agreed benchmark statements specifically for Environmental and Spatial Planning Postgraduate Degree programmes. The Course Team has been informed by the QAA Subject Benchmarks for Town and Country Planning 2008.
<b>8</b>	<b>Aims of the programme</b>	
	<b>The programme aims to provide:</b>	
		The MA Environmental and Spatial Planning aims to equip students for a career in the broad field of spatial planning, specifically as a chartered town planner. It is an intensive, contemporary course, located within an interdisciplinary school which teaches across the property, construction and planning sectors. It offers an integrated approach which engages students in creative problem solving related to professional practice across a range of scales and contexts. Students are encouraged to underpin these practices with critical thinking about the basis of planning intervention.
		The course reflects current topics in planning discourse by addressing the

main principles relevant to the making of place and the mediation of space, focusing in particular (although not exclusively) on issues such as environmental sustainability, ethics and governance. The personal and professional development of students is encouraged by a teaching philosophy which emphasises active engagement in the classroom and an evidence-based approach to learning and practice.

Through a rigorous and coherent programme of study, the course seeks to:

- Help students to practice and enhance their career opportunities within the profession of environmental and spatial planning;
- Enable students to become more capable, creative, reflective and critical professionals with the ability to deal with complex issues systematically and creatively in order to make sound judgements and reach conclusions which are clearly and concisely communicated;
- Help students develop a systematic understanding of knowledge and a critical awareness of the problems, issues and opportunities in this discipline and profession;
- Develop students rapidly as an independent and critical learners with personal, professional and social awareness;
- Enable students to consider, and critically comment on, the range of conflicting interests within political, social, economic, professional, technological, environmental, legal and international contexts;
- Enable students to undertake a critical evaluation of the knowledge base and operation of the profession and to create new knowledge and practice.

The course will achieved these through the development of four main thematic areas:

- Knowledge and understanding;
- Intellectual skills;
- Practical skills;
- Transferable skills.

- 9 Intended learning outcomes and the means by which they are achieved and demonstrated: the programme provides learners with opportunities to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, practical skills, and transferable skills as follows:**

<p><b>Knowledge and understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The philosophical and theoretical debates that underpin the evolution and practice of planning</li> <li>• The evolution and development of planning</li> <li>• The consequences of the processes of change within global, national, regional and local contexts</li> <li>• The impacts and consequences of planning upon individuals, communities and other key stakeholders</li> <li>• The causes and processes of change in and between the built and natural environment</li> <li>• The processes of development</li> <li>• The economic, political and social dimensions of development</li> <li>• A specialised field of study and its application to planning</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge and understanding within this course will be acquired through formal lectures, seminars, group work and debate, and site visits. Within the formal lecture settings a variety of delivery techniques will be utilised to engage students with different learning styles, and to encourage active learning on the part of the students.</li> <li>• Academic tutorial support is provided principally via individual supervisors allocated to support the Research Project module which lasts throughout the duration of the course.</li> <li>• Assessments will be varied as outlined within the Assessment Strategy which is outlined within the Student Handbook.</li> <li>• Assessment will include both formative and summative via coursework, presentation, exam, and project work</li> <li>• Directed reading/research</li> <li>• Student centred self-guided learning</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intellectual skills: the ability to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop an evidence based position, present it, and incorporate the responses of other positions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the formal lecture settings a variety of delivery techniques will be utilised to engage students with different learning styles, and to encourage active learning on the part of</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop the ability to make critical judgements based on a sound knowledge base</li> <li>• collect, analyse, evaluate and synthesise qualitative and quantitative planning data</li> <li>• recognise the open ended nature of planning as an activity</li> <li>• reflect critically on their own activities, and those relating to the wider perspective of planning</li> </ul>	<p>the students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of problem based scenarios, case study analysis, and debate will develop the intellectual and cognitive skills, which will be assessed both formatively and summatively via coursework, presentation, exam, and project work.</li> <li>• Use of the reflective learning log as an integrative part of the programme</li> </ul>
<p><b>Practical skills: the ability to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read maps and understand spatial scale</li> <li>• work within and understand the political context within which planners operate</li> <li>• develop a range of practical skills including management and negotiation skills</li> <li>• explore the theoretical value and practical application of professional issues such as ethics and values.</li> <li>• appreciate the differing values and attitudes of all those involved in planning</li> <li>• develop skills in advocacy and negotiation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of problem based scenarios, case study analysis, presentations and debate will develop skills. These will be assessed both formatively and summatively via coursework, presentation, exam, and project work.</li> <li>• A range of exercises, group and individual, explore these professional skills</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transferable skills: the ability to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop written, presentation, and verbal communication skills</li> <li>• work with, and relate effectively to others, showing respect for</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical self-reflection and an awareness of the student's own, and other people's, values is promoted through group seminars and discussions, use of case studies, simulations, Action</li> </ul>

<p>their views, opinions, beliefs and values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• manage time and prioritise workloads, for self and others</li><li>• develop personal skills to encourage effective team working</li><li>• manage, balance, and co-ordinate a range of activity</li></ul>	<p>Learning Sets and the learning log.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The intensive nature of the course, and the varied forms of assessment, encourage development of these skills.</li></ul>
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## 10 Programme structure and requirements, levels, modules, credits and awards

The structure of the course, the modules, levels and credit ratings and the awards that can be gained are shown below.

### Postgraduate Certificate

Module number	Module name	Credit
BNV7025	Spirit and Purpose of Planning	15
BNV7026	Policies and Plans	15
BNV7027	Development Management	15
BNV7028	Planning Futures	15

**All modules at level 7**

**Award: Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits)**

### Postgraduate Diploma

Module number	Module name	Credit
BNV7029	Development Processes and Placemaking	30
BNV7049	Strategy into Practice	15
BNV7047	Law and Environmental Governance	15

**All modules at level 7**

**Award: Post Graduate Diploma (60 credits plus PG cert. = 120 credits)**

### Masters

Module number	Module name	Credit
PRJ7008	Research Project	60

**All modules at level 7**

**Award: MA (Research Project 60 credits + PGCert + PGDip = 180 credits)**

## 11 Support for Learning

Students are encouraged to identify and, with guidance, to reflect on their own learning needs and are offered the following support as appropriate to those needs:

- An induction programme dealing with orientation and the dissemination of essential information including the philosophy of the course;
- An introductory session dealing with writing assignments and referencing;
- A Student Handbook, containing information relating to the University, the School and Faculty, the course and the modules;
- Access to administrative and academic staff, including Programme Director and Head of School, by appointment at reasonable times;
- Access to Faculty resources and a range of supported IT equipment including Moodle;
- Access to the services of specialist Library staff attached to the Faculty;
- Access to Faculty Student Support Tutors;
- Access to the University's Student Services, including those offered by the careers service, financial advisers, medical centre, disability service, crèche,

<p>counselling service, chaplaincy and Centre for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group tutorials;</li> <li>• Individual tutorials by appointment: face to face, email correspondence and over the telephone;</li> <li>• A number of the modules include lectures by practitioners which makes the academic programme more accessible and more useful to practice.</li> </ul>
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## 12 Criteria for admission

Candidates must satisfy the general admission requirements of the programme. The current admission requirements can be found under the „Entry Requirements“ tab of the web page for this course.

## 13 Evaluation and improvement of quality and standards

<p><b>Committees:</b></p> <p>Course Team; Board of Studies; Examination Board; Annual Monitoring Peer Review; Faculty Academic Sub-Committee; Faculty Learning and Teaching Group; Faculty Board.</p>	<p><b>Mechanisms for review and evaluation:</b></p> <p>Approval, review and re-approval events; Accreditation by professional bodies; Annual Monitoring Report; Student feedback questionnaires; BCU Student Satisfaction Survey; Annual staff appraisal; External Examiners' Reports; Course team meetings; Academic Planning.</p>
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## 14 Regulation of assessment

Details of the mechanisms and criteria for assessment in individual modules and the means of determining the final award of Masters Degrees are published widely. Students are issued with copies of the University's Standard Postgraduate Assessment Regulations on commencing the course, and individual and collective guidance is given by academic staff on their operation at appropriate times throughout the course.

To qualify for a **Postgraduate Certificate** a student must successfully complete all 4 modules. The pass-mark in all modules is 50%.

To qualify for a **Postgraduate Diploma** a student must successfully complete all 7 modules (PG Cert plus two PG Dip modules at 15 credits each and one PG Dip module at 30 credits). The pass-mark in all modules is 50%. The award of Postgraduate Diploma with Commendation will be made to students who satisfy the requirements for the award and achieve an overall average mark of between 60%

and 69% in the marks awarded for all 7 modules. The award of Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction will be made to students who satisfy the requirements for the award and achieve an overall average mark of 70% or above in the marks awarded for all 7 modules.

To qualify for a **Master's Degree** a student must successfully complete all required assessments (PG Dip plus and Dissertation by research). The pass-mark in the Dissertation (Research Project) is 50%.

The award of Masters Degree with Commendation will be made to students who satisfy the requirements for the award and achieve an overall average mark of between 60% and 69% in the marks awarded for all the 180 credits (PG Dip + Dissertation). The award of Masters Degree with Distinction will be made to students who satisfy the requirements for the award and achieve an overall average mark of 70% or above for all the 180 credits (PG Dip + Dissertation).

**External Examiners** are appointed. Their work includes:

- reviewing/approving coursework assignments and assessment criteria;
- reviewing/approving examination papers;
- monitoring standards through moderation of completed assessments;
- attending Examination Boards;
- participating in the course review processes.