

## **A look at the wider impact of the built environment: Podcast with UCEM's construction management programme leader, Christine Gausden**

**Andrew Belt:** Christine Gausden joined UCEM earlier this year and leads our construction management programmes. In this podcast, we will gain an insight on Christine's thoughts on the built environment and how her programmes can support your progression in construction management.

Hi Christine.

**Christine Gausden:** Good morning.

**AB:** How are you?

**CG:** I am good, thank you for asking.

**AB:** So, what inspired you to work in the built environment?

**CG:** I wished to be part of the built environment from a very early age, quite literally pre-school.

I was interested in buildings, most particularly the proportions and architecture of buildings. I would always be drawing – technical drawing with a set square and ruler - and with limited knowledge of the various career options, I thought I would be best suited to architecture.

As my early career progressed, noting I was a part-time student, I studied architecture, building surveying and construction management, and soon I realised my personal skillsets were best suited to construction management; I was a good leader and communicator, and very good at organising people and projects.

**AB:** When discussing a theme for this podcast, you suggested that you would like to talk about the wider impact of the built environment. Can you elaborate on this? Clearly, the sector is not just bricks and mortar, so how wide is the impact of the sector on our everyday lives?

**CG:** I am happy to do so.

The built environment impacts almost every aspect of our world; literally providing those assets within which we work, rest, and play, and the infrastructure that assists us in travelling between these assets.

The built environment has an impact on the economy, providing employment, society, impacting the safety, health, and wellbeing of us all and the environment, seeking to preserve all that is beneficial within the built and natural world.

**AB:** The need to be sustainable is a priority for every sector. How well do you think the built environment has dealt with sustainability? And in what ways are companies being more sustainable?

**CG:** Sustainability is more than simply the better resourcing of materials, which of course is important in the preservation of natural resources for future generations; it is about enhancing our health and wellbeing and the preservation of our history, the aesthetics and the maintenance of existing assets.

Companies are directed to do so by virtue of legislation and our wider understanding of corporate social responsibility; again, those impacts particular to the economy, society and the environment.

**AB:** What would you say are the best aspects of working in the built environment?

**CG:** The built environment comprises a broad church: you may chose to specialise in new build projects or particular to existing assets; likewise, you may chose to specialise in particular to schools, homes, hospitals, stadia, for example.

You may be employed by clients, designers, consultants or contractors. You can be site-based or office-based, or perhaps a combination of both. Best of all, you are part of a team, contributing to a lasting legacy, likely for decades to follow; imagine seeing people using an asset you have helped to deliver.

**AB:** As mentioned at the top, you joined UCEM this year to lead on our construction management programmes. What do students study on the two programmes?

**CG:** UCEM students study a mix of subjects; core subjects particular to the building process and the use of materials, the design, and the costs of delivering an asset; concurrent there is a need to understand law and economics, and the management of people, and there are modules which address these subjects also.

UCEM modules provide students with academic theory together with current best practice as adopted by industry and enables students to explore, research and apply their knowledge as their studies progress.

**AB:** Why do you think people should study on either of the two programmes?

**CG:** A qualification in the built environment provides a plethora of career opportunities and UCEM, in particular, enables students to study and work concurrently, effectively experiencing the best of both worlds. UCEM tutors are academically qualified, however, all have substantive experience as practitioners. They and the various support teams will seek to guide you in all areas of your studies.

**AB:** Thanks for your time, Christine – and thanks for listening!