



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
OF ESTATE MANAGEMENT

Planning Sustainable Environments

Module Descriptor

Module Code: PLN7PSE

Version: 1.00

Status: Final

Date: 15/04/2024

Summary Module Details

Module details

Module Title: Planning Sustainable Environments

Module Leader: TBC

Module Mode: Supported online learning

Semester: Autumn (UK)

Level: 7

Credits: 20

Learning Hours: 200

Contact and Study Hours

Directed Study Time: 60 hrs (30%)

Self-directed Study Time: 70 hrs (35%)

Assessment Study Time: 70 hrs (35%)

Assessment Type

Coursework: 30%

Computer Marked Assessment: 0%

Portfolio/Project: 70%

Portfolio: 0%

Module Summary

This module requires students to demonstrate a critical understanding of the evolving ways in which the planning system addresses the challenges of climate change and promotes sustainable urban, and non-urban, environments. It will include an exploration of the legal and regulatory mechanisms applied at different levels and contexts, as well as selected examples of best practice in sustainable transport, urban design, and ecological management. Students will be expected, individually and in groups, to interrogate national and local infrastructure matters in the light of current and evolving circumstances.

Taken on which Programmes

MSc Urban Planning (C)

Core (C) or Elective (E)

Module Aims

This module aims to offer students an opportunity to:

- Critically appraise the current and emerging legal and regulatory provisions relating to environmental management and best practice, as a means of adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change, from individual localities to the global level;
- Develop an advanced understanding of sustainable development from economic, social and environmental dimensions; the global and national policy discourses on measurement and indicators of climate change; how these challenges are defined and addressed in the planning system; and the roles that cross-sector stakeholders play in that regard;
- Evaluate a range of conflicting perspectives on the need for, and approaches to, climate change mitigation and the practicalities and parameters for addressing and resolving these on a range of geographical and strategic levels; and
- Acquire a sophisticated, integrated awareness of how the concept of sustainable cities is defined and advanced in a range of different contexts, and how approaches such as blue-green infrastructure master-planning, Biodiversity Net Gain and sustainable transport planning make important contributions in that regard.

Module Learning Outcomes

- LO1. To demonstrate a critical awareness of the current debates relating to the planning and delivery of sustainable settlements through an understanding of transport (public, private, and commercial), parking, cycling, and walking within a low carbon framework.
- LO2. To analyse and synthesise disparate, complex issues pertaining to spatial planning, to support the adaption of the built environment to mitigate the impact of climate change.
- LO3. To demonstrate a critical appreciation of built environment infrastructures (grey, green, and blue) and their inter-relationship with matters of urban landscape and biodiversity.
- LO4. To apply knowledge and deep understanding of current legal and regulatory instruments of environmental governance across a range of spatial levels.

Indicative Module Content

Module topics

- **Origins and evolution of environmental management regulations**
A critical overview of environmental legislation, policy and guidance at a global, UK and local level and how this has evolved over the past half century; it will focus on, for instance, the Paris Agreement and COP conferences, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Climate Change Act 2008, the National Planning Policy Framework and related concepts such as carbon neutrality and net zero; an examination of how and to what extent these are proving effective in addressing climate change at all the above levels, along with the related challenges and barriers.

Planning Sustainable Environments

- **Protected environments in the planning process**

A focus on the history of areas in the UK that have protected planning status on account of their landscape, natural resource, architectural and cultural heritage characteristics. Examples (among others) will include National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Green Belts, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, along with the related management strategies.

- **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Environmental Outcome Reports (EORs)**

The circumstances in which EIAs are required to inform decisions on development proposals; the related procedures; and a critical appraisal of their effectiveness in promoting sustainable development; and a consideration of whether and to what extent their replacements, EORs will provide a better solution. This will be illustrated with range of examples from developments in the UK and overseas.

- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

An introduction to BNG as a concept and emerging practice in the planning process, and the opportunities and challenges it presents to developers, decision-makers and the wider community.

- **An introduction to sustainable transport planning**

Offering insights into the concepts and practice of designing a sustainable transport system and how that system is considered and analysed as part of wider, integrated sustainability policies - in particular, how transport is related to sustainable land-use planning (e.g., the '15-minute city'), supports social development and informs business practice and wider economic growth. This will be illustrated with relevant examples of Sustainable Transport Plans from across and beyond the UK.

- **Blue-Green Infrastructure (BGI) master-planning**

Considering what a masterplan is, why and when one is required and setting it within the UK land-use planning framework at national, regional and local levels. An appreciation of the value and role of integrating and expanding blue-green assets and identifying when master-planning is vital for local and national governments in meeting their short- and longer-term policy objectives, visions, and targets.

This content will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the legal, moral and financial changes in professional standards and practice.

Overview of Summative Assessment

Module learning outcomes	Assessment	Word count or equivalent	Weighting	Minimum assessment threshold
LO1	Assessment 1 Coursework (e.g., Blog(s))	1,500	30%	50%
LO2, LO3, LO4	Assessment 2 Project (e.g., group preparation for public inquiry)	3,500	70%	50%

Module Pass Mark (each element is to be passed separately): 50%

Key Module Learning Resources

Core Sources and Texts

The core reading resources within each module will be provided via the specific Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) module pages and within the e-Library. Additional reference material and supplementary resources to support your studies are available through the UCEM e-Library.

Module tools

Students will have access to study materials, dedicated academic support, student forums, and learning activities via an online learning platform (VLE).

The module page on the VLE is broken down into structured study weeks to help students plan their time, with each week containing a mixture of reading, case studies, videos/recordings and interactive activities to go through. Online webinars/seminars led by the Module Leader can be attended in real time and provide opportunities to consolidate knowledge, ask questions, discuss topics and work through learning activities together. These sessions are recorded to support students who cannot attend and to enable students to recap the session and work through it at their own pace. Module forums on the VLE provide further opportunities to discuss topics with other students, complete collaborative work and get extra help from the module team.

Professional online resources

The e-Library provides access to trusted, quality online resources, selected by subject specialists, to support students' study. This includes journals, industry publications, magazines, academic books and a dissertation/work-based library. For a list of the key industry specific and education resources available please visit [the VLE e-Library](#).

Other relevant resources

Access is also provided to further information sources that include the British Library and Open University UK catalogues, as well as providing a monthly current awareness service entitled, **Knowledge Foundations** - a compendium of news, research and resources relating to the educational sector and the Built Environment.

The module resource list is available on the module website and is updated regularly to ensure materials are relevant and current.