

MA Urban and Regional Planning (RTPI Apprenticeship)

2nd Year Semester 1 –
Mentor/Employer Meeting

Your role as a Mentor

- Support your apprentice throughout the learner journey via regular meetings;
- Identify relevant Off the Job (OTJ) Training opportunities
- Skills Radar with the apprentice and monitoring progress;
- Attend progress reviews with the apprentice and the University
- Support the apprentice to prepare for End Point Assessment (EPA)
- Speak to the university about anything that changes: duties, promotion, leaving the company
- Keep apprentices safe

See mentor handbook for further information

Apprenticeship Off The Job

- An apprentice is required to log 20% of a 30-hour week as OTJ activity (even where an apprentice works more than 30 hours).
- OTJ must be:
 - New learning
 - Completed within their working hours
 - Relate directly to the KSBs
- OTJ is a requirement of funding: failure to keep up to date with their OTJ within a 4 week window could jeopardise their place on the Apprenticeship
- You will receive communications if your apprentice is not uploading their OTJ logs.

Progress Reviews

- Progress reviews are meetings which involve:
 - The apprentice
 - Their workplace mentor
 - A representative of the training provider (Skills Coach)
- They should take place a minimum of every 12 weeks – at least 4 times per year
- Take place all year round – not just in term time
- Apprentices need to prepare for the review meetings. Reviews on Aptem are now open 14 days prior to the review taking place for mentors and apprentices to pre-populate in preparation for the review.
- This year apprentices begin to focus on the specific KSBs to prepare them for the Professional Discussion.

Progress Reviews

Purpose: monitor the apprentice's progress and identify any issues

- Reviews should cover:
 - Progress towards attaining the KSBs in the apprenticeship
 - Review OTJ relevant to the KSBs of the apprenticeship
 - English and Maths qualifications (where required) and/or the professional progression of English and Maths
 - Obtaining any other mandatory qualifications (where relevant)
 - Preparation towards End Point Assessment (EPA)
 - Further support needed by the apprentice to progress
 - Setting SMART targets for the next 12 weeks for the apprentice to ensure their progress on the apprenticeship
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- Reviews should be documented on OneFile / Aptem and signed by the mentor, apprentice and University
 - Progress Reviews are a mandatory component: failure to attend reviews can put funding at risk

Changes to Circumstances

- Apprentices/mentors must inform the Apprenticeships Team immediately if there is a change to their circumstances, such as:
 - A change in their line manager / mentor
 - A change in their employer BEFORE they leave their current employer
 - A change to their job role and/or responsibilities
 - Being signed off work because they are unwell (MC claims)
 - Parental leave
 - Not being able to attend University for longer than 2 weeks (outside of annual leave)
 - Leaving their work place and withdrawing from the programme (if they get a new job or are made redundant)
- Contact us: apprenticeships@westminster.ac.uk

The Professional Discussion

- One of the steps to RTPI accreditation
- Takes place after completion of Master's degree
- Five questions to answer on KSBs (S3, S5, S6, S7, B3)...
...Plus, three (S8, B4, B5) to be covered in all the answers
- We will start preparing apprentices for this, so your support and guidance to apprentices will be appreciated
- Skills coaches will provide further information during progress reviews

Course diagram MA Apprenticeship

Semester 1

Semester 2

Summer

Year 1 -
Tuesdays

Planning
Theory &
Practice
1 (20)

Field Trip

Planning
Practice
Workshop 1

Planning Theory & Practice
2 (20)

Planning Practice
Workshop 2

Making and Managing Places (40)

Year 2 -
Wednesdays

Sustainable Cities
& Neighbourhoods
(20)

Planning
Practice
workshop 3

Option module (20)

Planning Practice
Workshop 4

Planning Research: Methods and Skills (20)

MA URP Dissertation/PIP & Colloquium (40)

Year 3
Apprentice
works FT with
employer

Apprentice no longer attends university but works towards their end-point assessment to gain chartered RTPI Status.

Teaching/learning schedule & format

2nd year teaching period: Every Wednesday 12 weeks per semester, Semester 1: September –December; Semester 2: January -April

Class format: primarily face-to-face; occasional online sessions via Blackboard (with advance notice eg tube strikes etc)

Dissertation/PIP takes students into August 2025

Week 6: No scheduled classes, time for groupwork, coursework catch-up, and research

Occasional additional activities may be organised

Professional Practice Workshops (mandatory for apprentices):

- *PPW3: Sept 10th 2025*
- *PPW4: May 19 & 20 2026*

Sustainable Cities and Neighbourhoods

Taken in Semester 1

This Module aims to give students:

- An introduction to the concepts and ideas of sustainability in urban development;
- Key debates on planning sustainable cities and neighbourhoods. Contemporary issues surrounding the theory and practice of sustainable development.
- Interdisciplinary and disciplinary discussions on the practice and implementation of sustainable development in planning and design.

Coursework 1: Essay Due 6th November 2025

Coursework 2: Communicating Planning Policy Due 17th December 2025

Planning Research: Methods and Skills

Year Long Module taken once a fortnight (alternating with Dissertation Module)

This module aims to provide students with:

- Skills needed to research a dissertation and prepare materials for the policy formulation process;
- Introduce and critically reflect upon a range of research methods employed by built environment researchers and practitioners.
- Critically examine the ways in which knowledge is generated within the study of the built environment; Introduce methods for collecting, compiling and analysing data, drawing on frameworks developed within urban studies, urban design and planning theory;
- Develop students' skills in critical analysis and evaluation of evidence also of working in an interdisciplinary context and with communities;

Coursework 1: Essay Due 7th January 2026

Coursework 2: TBC (Semester 2)

Dissertation/ PIP Colloquium

Year Long Module taken once a fortnight (alternating with Dissertation Module)

This module aims to provide students with:

- Skills needed to research a dissertation and prepare materials for the policy formulation process;
- Introduce and critically reflect upon a range of research methods employed by built environment researchers and practitioners.
- Critically examine the ways in which knowledge is generated within the study of the built environment; Introduce methods for collecting, compiling and analysing data, drawing on frameworks developed within urban studies, urban design and planning theory;
- Develop students' skills in critical analysis and evaluation of evidence also of working in an interdisciplinary context and with communities;

Coursework 1: Research Proposal Due 22nd April 2026

Coursework 2: Dissertation 25th August 2026

Planning Practice Week 3

- Changed this year to make the session one day and involving a refresher and more of an induction to the 2nd year.
- As Apprentices have already submitted reflective journals and OTJ logs it was an opportunity to go through these and offer top tips;
- Information Session on the professional discussion
- Session on health and well-being, getting ready for the 2nd year – dissertation etc.
- Occurs outside of semester: 10th September 2025
- Compulsory for apprentices to attend;

Coursework 1: Reflective Journal, Due 1st October 2025

Coursework 2: Reflective Journal, Due 22nd December 2025

Updates: The Apprenticeship Course

- Due to the government's removal of Level 7 apprenticeships for persons 22 years and over, the university has decided to close the course down with 25/26 the last intake;
- Apprentices will still be supported throughout the degree over the next 2 years;
- The regular town planning MA FT and PT Degree will continue, we await to hear from the government around next steps regarding funding and such eg Pathways for Planning; RTPI in discussions around further funding.

Thank you

Questions/Comments