

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION  
(Taught Postgraduate)**

<b>1 Awarding Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>2 Teaching Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>3 Final Award</b>	MA
<b>4 Programme Title</b>	Planning and Environment Research
<b>5 Programme Code</b>	4006
<b>7 QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b>	N/A
<b>8 FHEQ Level</b>	7
<b>9 Last updated</b>	July 2021

**10 Programme Aims**

1. To meet the aims of the ESRC's postgraduate training guidelines by providing high quality research training at Master's level in Planning and Environment Research
2. To provide learning opportunities to enable graduates to acquire the knowledge and understanding, skills and aptitudes necessary to undertake advanced research in planning in general, with the possibility to specialise in a range of issues including environment, housing, landscape, urban design, city regeneration and development.
3. To contribute to the University's objectives by providing high quality research training to an increasing number of postgraduates (Institutional Plan, 6.7 (ii) and (iii)) and enhancing their key skills and employability (5.7(iv))
4. To produce graduates who can proceed to careers in research in Universities, the public sector, the private sector, or the non-profit sector
5. To provide a qualification which fully meets the learning outcomes at Level 7 in the FHEQ.
6. To comply with prevailing University policies and QAA codes of practice.

**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 have:

- A1 A knowledge and understanding of matters relating to privacy and confidentiality in research
- A2 An awareness of the political context of research
- A3 An awareness of professional codes of practice

- A4 A knowledge and understanding of the power relations inherent in research field work
- A5 An awareness of the ethical responsibilities that a researcher has towards the researched
- A6 A knowledge and understanding of the application of selected methods of data collection
- A7 An understanding of strengths and weaknesses of different types of data and the development of a critical use of sources
- A8 An understanding of the use of methods and tools to analyse data
- A9 A good understanding in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

Ethical issues are taught by lectures and workshops. Students acquire knowledge of ethical issues through team work, presentations, case studies and independent reading. Teaching for A6-A9 will be delivered through the research methods and methodology modules in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The teaching strategy for A6-A9 is a combination of lectures, workshops and data analysis practicals. Students will learn by completing assignments, practical exercises and in the writing of their dissertations.

#### **Assessment Strategy**

Ethical issues will be assessed by a combination of team work assessment and written reports. Assessment strategy for A6-A9 will be a combination of data analysis practical's, reports and evaluation of the dissertation.

#### **Intellectual Skills**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 Define and formulate research problems and questions and hypotheses
- B2 Evaluate and select appropriate research methods
- B3 Understand sampling, sampling error, and biases in results
- B4 Apply concepts of generalisability, validity, reliability and replicability.
- B5 Demonstrate an understanding of the various traditions in social science research and their applicability to planning, environment and housing research
- B6 Demonstrate an understanding of current theoretical perspectives to planning, housing and environment research and their relationships to research and policy analysis
- B7 Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical issues surrounding planning, housing and environment research and policy making
- B8 Demonstrate an ability to develop research strategies to address policy and research issues in both core and specialised areas of planning, environment and housing research.

### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

B1 and B2 will be delivered through the modules about research and dissertation preparation. B3 and B4 will be delivered through the research methods and methodology modules in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

The teaching strategy for B1 and B2 is a combination of lectures, workshops and both discipline-specific and multi-disciplinary teamwork. Students learn through preparation of a dissertation and team-based problem solving exercises. Teaching for B3 and B4 will be through lectures and group discussions.

B5-8 will be delivered through a module in research. B8 will be delivered through the subject-specific optional modules and through the modules in research methods, methodology in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and dissertation preparation,

The teaching strategy for B5 and B8 is a combination of lectures, workshops and both discipline-specific and multi-disciplinary teamwork. Students learn through preparation of a dissertation and team-based problem solving exercises. Teaching for B6 and B7 will be through lectures and group discussions.

For B1-B4 students will learn through completing assignments and practical exercises. For B5 and B8 students will learn through completing assignments, practical exercises, and the completion of their dissertations. For B6 and B7 students will learn by completing assignments, practical exercises, and written examinations.

### **Assessment Strategy**

For B1-B4 will be teamwork assessment, practical assessments and a written report. For B5 and B6 will be by practical assessments. Assessment strategy for B7 and B8 will be a combination of essay-based assignments and written examinations.

### **Practical Skills**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1 Demonstrate the skills to identify and retrieve relevant materials relating to research, including annals, books, journals, theses, conference proceedings and resources available electronically and on the internet
- C2 Demonstrate the skills to maintain a personal research bibliography and use EndNote
- C3 Demonstrate IT skills, which may include word processing and other basic computing skills, including spreadsheets and database management and SPSS.

### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

Bibliographic and computer skills are taught through workshops and practical classes. Students learn bibliographical skills (C1-C2) by developing an initial bibliography for their dissertation.

### **Assessment Strategy**

General research skills will be assessed by means coursework employing a range of approaches in order to accurately assess student abilities. The assessment for the information skills module will be constructing a bibliography, incorporating bibliographic search strategies and professional design and layout. IT skills will be assessed by the bibliographic exercise and data practical assessment.

<b>Transferable/Key Skills</b>
On completing the programme students should be able to develop and demonstrate:
D1 The skills to communicate and present research findings effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
D2 The skills of effective written communication and presentation
D3 The skills to manage research, including writing proposals, planning the research project, and implementation on time
D4 The skills to work effectively as a member of teams both subject specific and multi-disciplinary.
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>
D1, D3 and D4 are taught through teamwork and individual presentations which provide opportunities to cooperate, develop ideas, improve problem-solving capacity and work to deadlines. D2 is taught through a range of iterative written assessments. Students acquire the key skills through active participation in large and small multidisciplinary and discipline-specific groups. The dissertation project provides specific opportunities of skill development through the construction of a research plan, through synthesizing knowledge and by participating in dissertation workshops and individual meetings with supervisors.
<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
Key skills are not independently assessed. However, D1-4 are indirectly assessed through coursework, team presentations, data practicals, research papers and the dissertation.

<b>12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features</b>
<b>Basic structure of the programme</b>
This programme has been designed to meet the ESRC 1+3 training guidelines. These guidelines emphasize the need for students to acquire key generic and subject-specific research skills in the Masters year prior to embarking on a doctoral programme. The programme will also cater for non ESRC-sponsored students, who could progress on to a doctoral programme or pursue a career in academic or non-academic research.
This is a one year full time or two year part time programme. It consists of three parts: training in research methods and skill development; modules in the discipline of planning; and a dissertation project. 70 credits are taught at Faculty level and 50 credits within the School.
The 70 credits taught at faculty level focus on generic research skills and competencies across the social sciences.
The 50 credits taught within the School are discipline-specific. These engage with a full spectrum of state-of-the-art planning, environment, housing and design research issues. To reflect the wide variety of disciplinary and research interests amongst MAPER students, all modules selected here are options. Students are able to customise their portfolio of courses to fit with the particular orientation of their own research interests. Such choices will be made under the individual guidance of the Degree Programme Director. This approach is designed to maximise the degree to which the customised MAPER options programme provides a foundation for later PhD study.
Four groups of modules are available. First, theoretical and epistemological modules available address the nature of planning theory, the ethical considerations surrounding the reflexive practitioner and other aspects of planning practice (e.g. planning frameworks

including communication skills, and the use of information sources). Second, technical skill based options, a wide range of substantive modules, addressing current arenas of planning research, are available, from, for example Conservation and the City and Planning Practice and Climate Change Finally, research-based modules, which involve individual and team-based research and specialised research training, include Linked Research which offers a choice of themes each year.

Students will complete a dissertation which will enhance and demonstrate their research skills and training in planning and environmental research There are no formal restriction on the type of project that can be chosen although projects are likely to employ some empirical research.

#### **Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)**

The programme caters for the following students:

- UK students preparing for PhD study
- UK Students wishing to study on the 1+3 PhD route at Newcastle University
- International students
- Mid-career or professional students wishing to specialise

Key features of the programme are:

- Strong research training
- Flexible specialist module choice
- Preparation for PhD or professional research career
- Taught by research staff
- Close links with PhD programme
- ESRC recognised

This programme provides strong research training for those who wish to specialise in environmental or landscape planning research. The programme provides a high quality, in-depth and comprehensive research training programme through modules provided by the Faculty Graduate School, while specialised subject modules are taken within the School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape with options to take modules in other departments in the University. This means that students can select modules that relate directly to their personal research interests while underpinning that specialism with a broad understanding of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The structure of the programme means that students are allied with PhD and MPhil students in the School and Faculty so that they can take part in the many benefits afforded to these students. MAPER students also join with the large body of taught postgraduate students in the School to take advantage of a variety of specialised modules in environmental and landscape planning.

#### **Programme regulations (link to on-line version)**

[4006 Programme Regulations 23-24](#)

### **13 Support for Student Learning**

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

### **14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

*Accreditation reports*  
N/A

*Additional mechanisms*  
N/A

## **15 Regulation of assessment**

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

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

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

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.