Urban Planning

School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering
Welcome

We are one of the largest centres for built environment education in the UK, and a leader in providing an integrated approach to the study of Architecture, Architectural Engineering, Civil Engineering, Construction and Urban Planning.

We bring together outstanding facilities, superb teaching, and excellent links with industry to ensure that you are ready for your future career. You will benefit from being taught by an enthusiastic group of staff whose cutting-edge research informs the content of our curriculum.

We are renowned for our extensive industrial partnerships, with many of our students being sponsored by major organisations. We have an established placement scheme available to all our undergraduates, which provides you with the opportunity to gain vital work experience in a professional environment. This gives you a major boost to your employment prospects as well as enhancing your training and development. If you haven’t done so already, please do take the opportunity to visit our University campus and meet our staff and students so you can see and experience what we have to offer.

Professor Andy Dainty
Dean of the School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering
Why study Urban Planning at Loughborough?

Our cities, towns and natural environments are shaped by both the action and inaction of planners. They are experiencing unprecedented development and challenges both now and in the future. How do we adapt our cities to tackle climate change? How can we use new technology and data to create better cities? How do we protect and conserve our natural environments?

Our new Urban Planning degree has been developed in collaboration with leading practitioners, linking theory and practice, to produce graduates who are uniquely prepared to address and lead the response to these new challenges.

Urban Planners play a critical role in developing and shaping healthier, more socially inclusive, economically dynamic and environmentally sustainable places. As a result of new technology, we now have more information and data about our cities and urban environments than ever before. This new technology allows us to change the way we plan urban developments. These opportunities will require planners with novel digital and data skill sets. By allowing you to acquire these skills as a student, our course not only enables your immediate career, but also gives you the key skills for the future.

We have worked with the planning community to develop a completely new approach to urban planning education to enable you to tackle future challenges. You will benefit from a truly unique and interdisciplinary experience that mimics your future career. Developed and delivered in the School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering, the course provides a unique opportunity to learn and work on projects alongside students from our other courses in the built environment: Architecture, Architectural Engineering, Civil Engineering, Construction Engineering Management, and Commercial Management and Quantity Surveying. In addition, in close collaboration with Geography and Environment, we bring together experts from across the University to deliver this new course.

During the course you will undertake several national and international* field trips to experience planning in the real world. These experiences will give you an in-depth insight into the importance of scale and context across a range of exciting projects.

*International field trips are exclusive to the MPlan
Vision

Our vision is to be the world’s leading integrated centre for built environment research and education, attending to the entire lifecycle of both buildings and infrastructure through our research, teaching and enterprise activities. During your degree, you will develop first-hand experience of working in interdisciplinary teams by collaborating with students from different courses across the School.

Each of the first three academic years contain weeks within the curriculum reserved for cross-cutting activities that expose you to the way in which different disciplines approach and solve issues concerning the built environment. These challenges are based on actual projects that industrial leaders face and have been developed in close collaboration with them. Together, you will tackle real-world challenges.

Teamwork

Development of your teamwork and leadership skills form a key part of your studies within the School. Each year our students use the wilderness as a classroom to yield amazing rewards; learning to work effectively within a team, to communicate, to lead, and to build confidence.

You will be able to take part in a residential outward-bound training course to build upon the expertise gained from your lecture and tutorial classes, to develop key skills needed to become leaders in industry. This sociable and challenging environment away from the classroom allows you to put the skills you have learned into practice. This will help you gain a more rounded understanding of teamwork and group management whilst building strong relationships with other students in the School.

The professional bodies that accredit our courses have highlighted the outward-bound training as a positive and best-practice feature of our courses. They state that it offers an innovative and engaging learning experience to meet key intended transferable skills and learning outcomes.

Research projects

This interdisciplinary ethos also underpins research within the School, with colleagues undertaking research at the interface of subject boundaries or drawing upon each other’s expertise to provide new insights. This benefits our students when it comes to choosing their research projects, which form a major component of all our degree programmes. In addition to students being able to formulate their own project with academics from different fields, we are also able to advertise projects that intrinsically span the knowledge base and technical skill sets of different professions in the built environment.

Our integrated School

We rely on Architects, Urban Planners, Construction Managers and Civil Engineers to shape the world we live in, from the design of buildings resilient to climate change, through to the management of contractors during construction and the planning of transport systems.

When you graduate, you are likely to be part of a team working on the planning, design, building and maintenance of infrastructure systems such as bridges, roads, railways and a variety of buildings such as skyscrapers, airports, hospitals or sports stadia worldwide. This requires an understanding and appreciation of the various people and processes that contribute to the construction cycle, that you can only acquire by studying in an integrated School such as ours.

Learn more about our integrated School

lboro.ac.uk/ug2021/arch-urban
If you are looking for hands-on industry experience with some of the world’s top companies, our School is the place for you.

Our Urban Planning course allows you to incorporate a placement year of paid work in industry after your second year of study. Professional practice experience is important to truly understand urban challenges and develop essential practical skills, such as time management, teamwork and presenting.

The School has a long and successful history of students undertaking placement years. As part of the development of our new Urban Planning course, we have established relationships with the planning community locally in the East Midlands as well as nationally. Placement opportunities could range from local planning authorities and independent planning consultancies to national government agencies.

During the placement year, your employer will nominate an industry specialist who will supervise you. You will also be visited by your University tutor at your place of work and will be required to write reports on your progress and experience.

Why a placement year?

- **Improved career prospects.** A placement gives you real-life experience that will help you stand out when applying for jobs. It can often lead to sponsorship during the final year of your course and a job offer upon graduation.
- **Salary.** Most placements are fully salaried, with typical salaries from £17,000 to £22,000.
- **Additional qualification.** A Diploma in Industrial Studies is awarded to students upon successful completion of their placement year.
- **Professional skill development.** A placement year helps you develop your skills that will be essential for your future career.
- **Put your knowledge to the test.** It is your chance to put your knowledge gained during your degree into practice within a professional environment and get a feel for your future role.

What support will I get?

You will be supported by dedicated staff in securing a placement that best suits your skills and professional aspirations. This includes:

- A Placement Administrator who helps you secure a placement that matches your interests and ambitions.
- An Industrial Training Coordinator who gathers and supplies information about placement opportunities and advises you on what to expect from the placement experience.
- Support via the University’s Careers Network and dedicated Careers Consultants who organise employer presentations, skills sessions, careers fairs, mock interviews and assessment centres.

Sponsorship

We work closely with a consortium of the leading UK companies who offer our students sponsorship and placement opportunities. Sponsorship will provide you with a bursary during your study, summer placement work for those who want it and a paid twelve-month placement with your sponsor company. In many cases students are offered employment with their sponsor company after graduating and many are now in senior positions within these companies.
Career prospects

Your time at Loughborough will form a launchpad from which you can build an exciting career. With so many opportunities available, you’ll never be short of ways to improve your prospects.

Highly skilled Urban Planning graduates are in high demand. Studying a degree at Loughborough presents wide-reaching opportunities including working with world-leading companies around the globe.

The skills of Urban Planning graduates are also very desirable in professions beyond planning. Your diverse skill set will include project management, communication, teamwork, leadership, critical thinking and analysis. These skills, combined with your specific, technical expertise, will set you up for a successful career in a broad range of disciplines.

We have sought input from Urban Planners working in local authorities, the development sector and the wider planning community to inform the principles, content and teaching of the course. This means that the course is founded on innovative learning and teaching methods and reflects the skills needed in practice, including communication skills. Practitioners will be actively involved in course delivery through teaching, workshops, practice visits, research projects and collaborations.

Our course is guided by an Industrial Advisory Board which is made up of prominent planning practitioners. The board meets at regular intervals throughout the year to constantly review the development of the course so you can be assured that it truly reflects the needs of the planning sector.

Careers fairs

In addition to university-wide careers fairs, the School holds its own careers fair. In recent years, this has had over 50 companies attending specifically to employ our students. This includes major consulting and contracting companies in the UK, as well as more local and specialist firms.

Careers Network

Our award-winning Careers Network team is here to help and support you, offering everything from CV workshops, one-to-one advice sessions and mock interview practice sessions to high-profile employer events. We’ve got everything you need for a successful future.

Find out more: lboro.ac.uk/careers

Further study

Our Urban Planning course also prepares graduates for further training within the wider industry. We offer a range of relevant postgraduate programmes to advance your knowledge after completing your undergraduate degree.

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Outstanding facilities

Our fantastic 440-acre single-site campus with plenty of open space, gardens and sport areas offers great facilities for every aspect of student life. Interspersed with academic buildings and accommodation, it allows students to think about the role of urban planning and implement some of their own ideas in a practically relevant setting.

At over 3,000 square metres, our purpose-built, open-plan laboratory is one of the largest in the UK, benefiting from £1 million in refurbishment and new equipment in the last five years. You will have access to a range of high-quality learning environments with sophisticated digital equipment, including virtual and mixed reality laboratories, computer clusters with the latest software technologies, learning hubs and spaces for collaborative working.

Loughborough University London Residential Field Trip

As a future planner, it is important to understand how the context of a development or city influences the design and the proposal. You will benefit from investigating planning in practice in real-life situations at different scales from the Loughborough University campus (our ‘living laboratory’) through to the urban environments of our local cities.

During the final year of the BSc and the third year of MPlan, you will undertake a week-long residential field trip based at our London campus on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Loughborough University London operates inside over 9,000 square metres of collaborative learning space, providing state-of-the-art equipment and materials to ensure research, teaching and creativity can thrive. The campus is surrounded by the world’s finest sporting venues, including the Copper Box Arena, London Aquatics Centre, Lee Valley Velopark and London Stadium.

These experiences will give you an in-depth insight into the importance of scale and context across a range of exciting projects. The smart cities theme and digital ethos, which run across the course, aspire to maximise the employability of our students by targeting the needs of future cities and city makers.

Student using VR to evaluate options as part of the mixed reality and robotics research lab.
Andrew Timmis
Urban Planning Course Director

“There is an acute shortage of highly skilled planners. Our course not only provides our students with new skills and techniques in digital planning but also develops professionals who can lead and drive change in a fast-evolving sector.”

By 2050, 3.5 billion more people are expected to live in cities around the world. Urban Planners will play a critical role in designing and creating solutions to enable this expanding population. Equally, Urban Planners are central to how we adapt to a changing climate and create a more sustainable and healthier society.

New technology will revolutionise how we plan and manage our cities and built environments. Big data, the Internet of Things and remote sensing will give Urban Planners new insight and tools to use resources and space more efficiently. Real-time data could allow our cities to adapt and change to the needs of residents. A degree in Urban Planning will equip you with the knowledge and skills to make a positive change and tangible impact on our cities and towns.

About the course
Our Urban Planning course has been designed to develop the core skills and knowledge of planning professionals. There is a strong focus on new digital and data skills which are highly attractive to graduate employers. The course includes practical and hands-on experiences in many aspects of urban planning and design, helping you link theory to practice. We have established links with the planning community across local planning authorities, developers and consultancies to enable opportunities for placement.

To become a recognised Professional Town Planner, you will need to complete an undergraduate degree in Urban Planning and a postgraduate degree in a specialist area of planning. Our MPlan course has been designed to give you the opportunity to undertake these in one integrated course. The fourth year of our MPlan is focussed on developing specialist knowledge in transport planning and smart cities.

Year 1
Areas studied include the principles and role of urban planning, the fundamentals of understanding space through urban analytics and spatial analysis, contemporary issues of planning, design and professional skills.

Year 2
Areas studied include place making and urban design, principal research methods, environmental management, and analysis skills.

Optional placement year
Optional industrial placement leading to an additional Diploma in Industrial Studies.

Year 3/4 (BSc) or (MPlan)
In addition to an independent research project on a chosen topic, areas of study include urban mobility, a week-long field trip at our Loughborough University London campus, and key urban planning theories and policy.

Final year (MPlan)
You will develop advanced skills in specialist knowledge areas of planning such as transport and infrastructure. Our MPlan year also includes a European field trip and a large-scale integrated design project.

Typical offers
A level: AAB [MPlan] or ABB [BSc]  
IB: [MPlan] 35 (6,6,5 HL) or [BSc] 34 (6,5,5 HL) including 6 at SL Maths
BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma: D*DD [MPlan] or DDD [BSc] in a relevant subject
GCSE: min. 5 GCSEs grades 9-4 (A*-C) including Maths and English Language grade 4/C

*Diploma in Industrial Studies
Entry requirements correct at the time of print. Please check our website for the latest version and other qualifications.

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This brochure was written several months in advance of the academic year to which it applies (2021). Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained within is accurate at the time of publishing, but updates (for example to course content) are likely to occur due to the time between publication and the course start date. It is therefore important to visit our online prospectus at www.lboro.ac.uk/study before applying to check for any updates, as this will be the most up-to-date repository of information.