

Careers in Town Planning

Town Planning

Careers in Town Planning can have a variety of different titles such as urban/rural planner, town and country planner, spatial planner etc.

Town planners are responsible for overseeing and managing the use of space within villages, towns and cities. Their main aim is to assess the potential social, economic and environmental implications of any development proposal and provide plans and strategies that are of benefit to the community, economically viable and environmentally friendly.

Town planners work on a variety of areas within their role. Examples include:

- Working with multi agency partners such as: architects, civil engineers, building contractors, surveyors and construction managers in new developments and redevelopments.
- Using legal knowledge as well as planning knowledge to make and implement policies to guide developments.
- Understanding population trends within a certain area and predict future demands that could be made on the area (urban or rural)
- Assessing planning applications both residential and commercial (e.g. house extension to a new bus station) and preparing reports on viability.

Entry Routes

Generally, no specific undergraduate degree is needed for a career in town planning, although specific degrees do exist. In order to become a Chartered Town Planner you will need to complete a qualification accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

In order to progress onto Chartered Membership status, you must study and gain **both** the *spatial* and *specialist* qualification. However, you can also study the *combined* qualification which combines both spatial and specialist areas.

To see a full list of Universities that offer RTPI accredited postgraduate courses and for further information please see their webpage: www.rtpi.org.uk/education-and-careers/find-a-course/accredited-qualifications/

The main skills employers are looking for include:

- Verbal communication skills including negotiation and persuasion
- written communication skills for report writing
- Commercial awareness
- Project management
- Team working skills
- Flexible creative thinking and initiative skills
- Ability to work on a number of different problems at once

Getting Experience

Although there are a few summer internships and placements available in town planning they are quite rare. It is advisable to get voluntary experience with your local council or compiling a list of independent planning consultancies and contacting them applying speculatively for experience. Further advice is available on the RTPI website here: www.rtpi.org.uk/the-rtpi-near-you/rtpi-international/working-in-the-uk/work-placements-in-the-uk/

Further Resources

- National Careers Service: nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/townplanner.aspx
- Prospects: www.prospects.ac.uk/town_planner_job_description.htm
- Royal Town Planning Institute: www.rtpi.org.uk/education-and-careers/become-a-planner/what-is-planning/
- Targetjobs: targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/job-descriptions/279463-town-and-country-planner-job-description