



Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from
The University of Sheffield

1	Programme Title	Geography and Planning
2	Programme Code	TRPU107
3	JACS Code	L700
4	Level of Study	Undergraduate
5a	Final Qualification	BA with Honours (BA Hons)
5b	QAA FHEQ Level	Honours
6	Intermediate Qualifications	None
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Social Sciences
9	Department	Urban Studies and Planning
10	Other Departments involved in teaching the programme	Department of Geography
11	Mode of Attendance	Full-time
12	Duration of the Programme	3 years
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	None
14	Date of production/revision	June 2017, February 2020, February 2022, March 2023

15. Background to the programme and subject area

This dual honours degree programme combines elements from courses in Geography and Urban Studies and Planning, drawing on the teaching and research expertise of staff working across both departments.

The course responds to the rapidly changing world. Noting that cities (but also rural and peri-urban spaces) are increasingly recognised as critical sites of social, economic, and environmental opportunities, experimentation, transformation and challenges. The course brings together an understanding of these complex processes. Drawing on insights from Human Geography, Urban Studies and Planning, the course focuses on the geographies of political decision making, often urban centres, where finance and business investment is centred, and where environmental risk, cultural differences and consumption as well as complex networks of social relationships proliferate. Using theories and research from social, environmental, cultural, economic, development and political geography in tandem with related work in Urban Studies and Planning, the course explores how spaces, usually urban, can offer many benefits and opportunities for a range of people, supporting employment, healthcare, education, entertainment, diversity and neighbourliness. But these geographic spaces are often the sites of significant problems, including pollution, congestion, crime, challenges of affordability, conflict over resources such as land, housing, schools and work. This course introduces students to these opportunities and challenges, and also examines how decisions are made in how space and place is used, controlled and planned. This recognises conflicts over who has the right to be in place and to use cities as well as rural spaces in particular ways. Students are introduced to processes of analysis to understand places and their problems and potentials, noting the role of government policy making, and formal planning responses, but also engaging with the actions and interests of private and voluntary sectors. This programme allows students to engage with these issues and debates, developing core skills relating to these opportunities and challenges. The programme aims to be stimulating and challenging while providing you with a broad platform from which you can launch a variety of careers tied to Human Geography and Urban Studies and Planning more generally, and/or develop further specialism through masters' level training.

Students will engage in wide ranging debates at the intersection of geographical processes and planning-orientated and urban responses. Within a flexible programme structure students are offered considerable scope to select the modules of their choice and to specialise in particular areas of interest. This includes

having the opportunity to explore the social, economic and environmental opportunities, experimentations, transformations and challenges bearing down on people and places globally, nationally and locally. Alongside the development of critical thinking and reflection, students will also develop core analytical skills needed to understand, interpret and devise solutions to complex processes of spatial change. Much of the course can be considered to be providing Education for Sustainable Development.

The first year will establish the foundations of your knowledge of human geography, urban studies and planning. In your second year, the course will build on students' understanding of economic, social and political geographies along with the urban theory and planning policies and market processes that shape change globally, nationally and locally. Your third year allows you to specialise in the modules that interest you, and allows you to complete your own research Dissertation project.

The course includes project work in the first and second years, and field activities in all three years depending on what options are selected. It includes the opportunity to apply to study abroad. The course is largely assessed via coursework including reports, projects, essays, presentations and blogs while formal examinations also play a role in assessment. There is a mix of individual assignments and group work.

Employability is a key focus within the course, with a Professional Skills Development module developing your career and employability skills across each year, supplementing the development of geographic, planning and urban professional skills (such as mapping and analysing data) within core modules. You can enhance this training by applying for optional placements, either for short periods within vacations or over an entire year, supported by the Department's dedicated employability team and regular employability newsletter. As a result of the high quality of the degree and the reputation of the department, our graduates from the course are in high demand and there are excellent prospects for employment in a very wide range of careers.

Further information on the course and on employment prospects may be obtained from the department web site at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/usp>.

16. Programme aims

The aims of the BA in Geography and Planning reflect the overall teaching and learning aims of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning which are:

1. To develop in students a broad understanding of contemporary geographical and urban studies and planning challenges and issues together with a more detailed and critical knowledge of selective specialised aspects.
2. To develop students' knowledge of the history and complexities of geographic and urban planning issues, as well as their understanding of different ways of theorising, knowing and researching these concerns.
3. To support students in developing intellectual curiosity, critical thinking and independent judgement.
4. To maximise student employability by progressively developing competencies in a wide range of transferable and professional skills.
5. To develop and enhance the techniques and skills needed for graduate employability underpinned by a commitment to self-improvement through reflection, and ongoing skills development.
6. To provide a supportive environment for students and to include them in shaping and managing an effective programme and their learning opportunities.
7. To enable students to maximise their potential in all aspects of their programme of study.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:

K1	The complexity and comparability of global geographical and planning challenges and their particular and diverse manifestations in different areas;
K2	The historical theoretical and political context of geographic and planning processes and spatial change;

K3	A critical approach to geography and planning which foregrounds politics, urban inequality, the realities of urban conflict, goals of social and environment justice, and processes of public participation;
K4	How diverse knowledges shape change in the economic, built and natural environment, including understandings from public participation and changes wrought through community action;
K5	The multiple scales of geography and planning from the local to the global, including the rural, and the processes of connection and mobility across urban scales and spaces;
K6	The nature, purpose and methods of interventions and policies in shaping geographic and planning places and processes;
K7	Core debates, theoretical approaches, and critiques of Geography and planning scholarship;
K8	The natural, social, economic, developmental, and political environments;
K9	The purposes and practices of a range of geographical and planning-related professions (such as urban planning, urban design, regeneration, community development, surveying, housing, and environmental management);
K10	Methods and methodologies underpinning critical geographic and planning research including a critical awareness of the politics of knowledge production and potential risks involved in undertaking research;
K11	Verbal, written, digital, visual and graphic means of representing and communicating geographic and planning phenomena, problems and solutions;
K12	the moral and ethical dimensions of geographic and planning research and the work of professionals working within this broad field;
K13	An appreciation of the diversity of cultures and views and an orientation to social justice offering a voice to the more marginalised, and equal opportunities for all;
K14	An awareness of the complex environmental challenges facing all areas and the global imperative to reduce resource use through planning and urban development as part of an orientation towards environmental justice and sustainable development;
K15	An appreciation of key sectors around which integration of understanding needs to occur, such as infrastructure, services, environment, economy.

Skills and other attributes:	
S1	Identify, synthesise, and critically review disciplinary knowledge;
S2	Apply disciplinary concepts and methods in evaluating and interpreting geographic and urban planning phenomena including articulating their ethical and social justice implications;
S3	Use logical argument, critical thinking, and creativity to frame geographic and urban planning challenges and to suggest responses to a variety of problems in different contexts and at different geographical scales;
S4	Represent geographic and urban planning information and arguments to a range of audiences using appropriate written, oral, visual, graphical and GIS media, methods, and technologies;
S5	Design, execute, evaluate, and report an investigation of a geographic or urban planning phenomena identifying and applying knowledge within and up to the frontiers of the discipline;
S6	Utilise intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and independent judgement;
S7	Work independently and as part of a team deploying effective organisation, personal responsibility, and planning skills;
S8	Describe skills, attributes, and experience, and critically reflect on professional development to foster lifelong learning skills;
S9	Relate to, work with, and learn from different people, recognising and being respectful to diverse perspectives and needs, taking account of social dynamics and power relations.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

Students on this programme will be exposed to the teaching of two academic disciplines and will therefore experience a wide range of teaching methods, including lectures, tutorials, seminars, workshops, practical classes, project work and field classes.

There is a clear development of teaching and learning over the course to add value to the student's learning experience. The whole course emphasises a mix of coursework and examination to engage progressively with the various skills and to build successively more in-depth and interconnected knowledge. At Level 1 you are introduced to this variety through lectures and seminars supplemented by field and project activities. Assessment is coursework including essays, reports and posters, with some examinations. At Levels 2 and 3 alongside these teaching techniques we place increased emphasis on small group learning, with seminars, workshops, and project work to foster deeper understanding of issues, enhance research skills and give experience of collaborative working practices. Assessment at levels 2 and 3 are a mix of coursework and examination. Core skills and knowledge, such as the challenges of undertaking geographic or urban planning research, are developed within the compulsory modules. Optionality is found in all three years, but it increases in extent as you progress through the course, with choice offered in both departments. The third year concludes with a Dissertation in which, under supervision, students address an appropriate issue of their choosing and undertake independent research around that topic.

The following teaching and learning methods are employed in the programme, which relate particularly to the specific learning outcomes as indicated.

- 1. Lectures** are used to impart fundamental knowledge. They provide the foundation on which more reflective teaching and learning is built up through seminars and self-directed study (including through reading). They contribute primarily to the development of knowledge (K1 – K15) and (S1, S2 and S3).
- 2. Seminars are an important part of some modules. They provide a smaller group format in which the ideas, concepts and knowledge introduced in the wider module are discussed and examined, deepening the student's understanding of a topic (K1 -K15 above) and allowing the student to develop their critical reading, communication and collaborative skills (S1, S2, S3 and S6 above).**
- 3. Projects** allow the student to work collaboratively to examine an issue in depth, often incorporating fieldwork in which the student is brought into contact with practitioners or members of the public, and requiring the synthesis of knowledge from differing parts of the curriculum (S1 - S3). In addition, projects encourage the student to develop research skills (S5) and to improve their group working (S7), to practice respectful interactions with diverse people (S9), and to develop their skills at presenting evidence and argument (S4).
- 4. Workshops form a core component of some modules.** These offer tutor-guided focused work on a specific topic where the student's participation is a key part of the process (S2, S3, S6 and S7).
- 5. Group Work** forms a central part of the teaching and learning experience for students (S7 above). Some group work is formative, contributing to individual assessments, in other cases group assessments are undertaken and are accompanied by peer review.
- 6. Individual research** is employed in teaching to aid the student to deepen their knowledge of a particular area of geography or planning (K3 and K4) and to improve their research skills and self-management skills (S5-S7, S9) and (K1-8, K10 and K11).
- 7. Specialised studies** are key to the programme. They enhance the student's broad knowledge of geography and planning by the acquisition of deeper understanding derived from a range of modules offered by the two departments (K1-15).

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

As noted above, a variety of teaching and learning methods is employed in the course to achieve the learning outcomes. There is a progressive development of assessment methods and criteria to reflect the developmental attributes of the teaching.

At Level 1 there is an emphasis on a variety of coursework formats and some formal examinations to impart, practice and assess core knowledge and skills. Students are given formal and informal feedback

during the course of modules.

At Level 2 there is increased emphasis on coursework and project work in order to foster deeper understanding of issues, enhance research skills and give experience of collaborative working practices. Assessed coursework may take a variety of forms, but includes essays, reports, posters and visual materials, financial appraisals and virtual outputs from multi-media computer packages. Some understanding and learning may be assessed through examination depending on the choices of modules.

- Level 3 offers students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of geographic and urban planning issues through a choice of modules. The assessment for these will vary according to the combination of choices the student makes. Students will also complete a dissertation which enables them to practice the management and presentation of an independent piece of research

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

From external professional and academic institutions:

- The Honours and Masters' level qualification descriptors within the Quality Assurance Authority for Higher Education (QAAHE) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, 2014;
- The QAAHE Subject Benchmark Statement for Town and Country Planning, 2016;
- The Learning Outcomes contained in the Royal Town Planning Institute Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education, 2012;
- The University of Sheffield's Our vision and strategic plan 2020-2025;
- The TUOS Department of Geography's Programme Specifications for the BA Geography degree.

From within the Department's internal processes and procedures:

- The Department of Urban Studies and Planning's Statement of Educational Philosophy, 2016;
- Past reports from external examiners, RTPI Accreditation Boards and undergraduate Year Tutors;
- The Department's external Liaison Committee consisting of professional planners, planning academics, staff and students and the RTPI Dialogue Member for the Department.

20. Programme structure and regulations

The programme structure is modular and in each year students study modules worth a total of 120 credits per Level.

There is a significant element of choice of modules for students, across all three years. This provides a great deal of flexibility for students to tailor the programme of study to their own interests and aspirations.

The first year (Level 1) introduces some of the fundamental ideas in geography and planning concerning the challenges in urban areas, understood through global examples and a detailed localised understanding of place and people. It introduces approaches within Human Geography to understand these realities, and systems of planning established to respond to some of these. Key skills in research, data handling, and academic writing are introduced at Level 1. Assessment is a mix of coursework and unseen examination. This is delivered through 70 credits of core teaching balanced across the two departments, and 50 credits of optional choice, which includes the guided choice of guided modules up to a total of 20 credits.

Students can transfer to the MPlan Urban Studies and Planning up to the end of level 1 if they have also taken TRP1x2 & TRP107.

Students can transfer to the BA Geography up to the end of level 1 if they have also taken GEO11003 & GEO11004.

In the second year (Level 2), knowledge of geography and planning is deepened through 40 credits of core USP modules along with a choice of 40 credits from a list of approved Geography modules. Students then further their interests in planning and geography by selecting a remaining 40 credits from a wide range of USP or GEO modules offered at Level 2, of which 20 credits can be external to the two departments.

In the third year (Level 3), students continue to develop their specialist knowledge of selected aspects of planning and geography. They take 60 core credits within USP, 40 core credits from Geography, and a further 20 credits of guided module choice from either department (or external to the two departments).

There is a wide range of modules offered by the two departments for students to choose from. The third year concludes with a Dissertation in Geography and Planning worth 40 credits, in which, under supervision, students address a geographical or planning issue of their choosing and undertake independent research around that topic.

Each level has a zero credit Professional Skills Development module seeking to deliver a range of employability skills through a series of sessions over the academic year, tailored to each student cohort. The module combines careers events and workshops and is designed as an opportunity for all undergraduate students in Urban Studies and Planning to improve their student experience through enhanced employability skills development. Through a series of lectures from visiting practitioners, the careers service and academic staff along with seminars discussing key skills development, students will develop an understanding of the skills required to succeed in the workplace.

Please refer to the [Programme Regulations](#), [General University Regulations](#) and the [On-line Directory of Modules](#) for detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules.

21. Student development over the course of study

Level 1

A key aim of Level 1 is to allow new students to develop a strong knowledge base covering the basic contextual knowledge areas, which then will serve as a foundation on which the more advanced parts of the programme are developed. The programme structure ensures a progressive development of knowledge from TRP132: (Cities, Place and People), and TRP113 (Contemporary Urban Challenges) in semester 1, which runs alongside a basic introduction to Geography in the year-long GEO114 (Exploring Human Geographies). In the spring Semester students study TRP133 (Development Planning and the State).

Skills are an important focus at Level 1. Students gain important transferable information handling and academic study skills in TRP108 (Information and Communication Skills) as well as in parts of the year-long GEO114. The zero credit Professional Skills Development module (TRP112) introduces you to employability skills, including team-working and reflection.

Twenty credits of guided module choice gives the student an opportunity to broaden their knowledge and learning experiences.

50 credits of module choice are available to students at Level 1. Advice is provided on which modules to select to enable maximum flexibility in transfer to a single honour course if desired.

At the end of Level 1 the successful student will have a thorough basic grounding in geography, planning and urban processes, and will have enhanced academic and research skills.

Students can transfer to the MPlan Urban Studies and Planning up to the end of level 1 if they have also taken TRP1x2 & TRP107, or BA Geography if they have also taken GEO11003 & GEO11004.

Level 2

In the second year knowledge of geography and urban planning is deepened and begins a process of partial specialisation through the arrangement of credit choices. Students must take 40 credits of core modules, namely TRP216 Spatial Analysis in the Autumn semester and TRP215 Researching the city: applied skills in practice, in the Spring semester. Students then choose 40 credits from a list of approved Geography modules (including a focus on sustainability, culture, power, and social justice), with a further 40 credits free choice from approved modules within both departments (where up to 20 credits of this free choice can be taken in departments external to USP and Geography).

Level 3

In the third year, students continue to develop their specialist knowledge of selected aspects of planning and geography. They are required to complete two core modules which include TRP3X1 Plan-making and Development and the year long forty credit Dissertation in which, under supervision, students address an appropriate issue of their choosing and undertake independent research around that topic. In addition, students can choose from a wide range of option modules in both departments to focus down on the specialist preferences for a further 60 credits (where 40 are from the Geography department) and the remaining 20 can be from outside the two departments on approved modules. The choice of modules will vary over time, but include topics such as housing, environmental policy, challenging development, democracy and some field class options.

Each level

Each level has a zero credit Professional Skills Development module seeking to deliver a range of employability skills through a series of sessions over the academic year, tailored to each student cohort. The module combines careers events and workshops and is designed as an opportunity for all undergraduate students in Geography and Planning and to improve their student experience through enhanced employability skills development. Through a series of lectures from visiting practitioners, the careers service and academic staff along with seminars discussing key skills development, students will develop an understanding of the skills required to succeed in the workplace.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

All applications are treated individually but the normal entry requirement for admission to the programme is three 'A' Levels at grades ABB or the equivalent in other qualifications. One of these should be in Geography or another social science. In addition, GCSE grade C is required in English Language and Maths.

No specific subjects are required for the other 'A' Levels or equivalents, but it is preferable that applicants should have some background in another social science subject such as economics, politics, sociology or business studies. Applications are particularly welcomed from minority ethnic students, from women, from mature students and from disabled students.

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available in the undergraduate brochure for the department, which is available on-line at www.sheffield.ac.uk/usp. Further information about admission to the University may be obtained from the University's On-Line Prospectus at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/prospective/>.

23. Additional information

As part of TRP215 Researching the city: applied skills for practice, students undertake a field class activities which may include a residential visit to a city in the UK or within Europe. The costs of transport and accommodation are covered as part of the student fees but subsistence is self-funded. Students should anticipate a daily expenditure of £40.

Destinations for field classes may change from year to year in response to our course content, our world-leading research, feedback from previous students or wider global events. We will contact students in advance of any changes to our field classes.

Further information about the programme and about the Department of Urban Studies and Planning is available on the department web site at www.sheffield.ac.uk/usp. Information about the Department of Geography is also available at www.sheffield.ac.uk/geography.

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid.