Get ready for MSc Planning and Urban Leadership

I am delighted that you have decided to pursue your studies at UWE Bristol and join our very distinct RTPI accredited programme: MSc Planning & Urban Leadership. I eagerly anticipate extending a warm welcome to you at UWE Bristol. Our university boasts one of the largest planning schools nationwide.

As the Programme Leader, it is my responsibility to facilitate your transition into our programme and to ensure its seamless operation. It is particularly important to me that you find the programme rewarding and engaging.

Dr Amir Gohar
Programme Leader

Before you start

We are looking forward to welcoming you in the week commencing 14 September for Starting Block and the beginning of your programme.

Starting Block will help you settle into university and to help you get to know your teaching team and course mates. We will help you find your way around, get used to our systems, and practise the skills you need to make a strong start. Look out for further emails and explore the Starting Block website with more details.

'Understanding your teaching timetable' – Please note that as you are studying on a distance learning programme there are no set lecture times to be shown in your timetable. All of your lectures are provided as pre-recorded material via Blackboard. Traditionally taught students in face-to-face classrooms have set attendance times in their timetable so that they know which lecture theatre to attend (you may therefore see some information relation to the Plan Making module and the Implementation & Design Quality module as these are shared with other programmes). The weekly webinars that you will attend are delivered via Blackboard Collaborate interface. They are also not shown in your timetable as these do not require a physical classroom, but tutors will provide you with attendance dates/times at the start of the module. The only sessions that should be showing in your MYUWE timetable relate to the Starting Block/Induction and to generic events for all students.

Preparing and arrival
You can find everything you need to know about enrolment, Starting Block and the start of teaching, on our Preparing and Arrival webpage. Take a look at our website to familiarise yourself with our facilities and services such as the library, study skills, academic support, health and wellbeing support and much more.

You can also explore our support for careers and enterprise. UWE Careers & Enterprise provide a range of workshops, appointments and a huge range of online resources to support students in realising their future ambitions. The Careers Toolkit is our online portal to finding vacancies, booking onto events and accessing a range of resources.

Enrolment
Once you have satisfied all admissions requirements, we'll send you your login details for our IT systems to enable you to activate your university email account. Once your account has been activated, you'll gain access to the MYUWE platform where you can enrol. Note that your login details for MYUWE are different to those used for the UWE Welcome website. Enrolment for September programmes will only be open from August onwards. You can find guidance and further information on our Enrolment website.

ID card - upload your photo now
We can only print your ID card if you have added your photo to MYUWE. To avoid delays, upload your photo as soon as you receive login details. For help, go to our student card guidance.

Engage with your programme

Start your learning
During your studies you will be using 'Blackboard' online learning platform. Our IT webpages give information on how to access this. Prior to formally beginning your first modules, you may want to familiarise yourself with how to access the platform.

I will be in touch at the start of the course via your UWE email address to share more details on four programme-level induction webinars. These will familiarise you with the different platforms that UWE uses and their interface.

Read around your subject
Here are some of our recommended titles for you to read, to be inspired by and to understand the scope of your degree programme:

For those unfamiliar with **planning,** and in particular the planning system in England, you should read the Government's Plain English Guide. You may also wish to dip into the Government's online Planning Portal, which is a tool used by practicing planners in England.

If you wondered what it is like to be a **'planner'** you should view this online video by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

For a more academic introduction to planning, then please have a look at the https://liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/journals/issue/5554Town Planning Review open access journal webpages.

Planning in the media: you may wish to read some of the current Planning-related debates such as on The Guardian "Cities" page. You may also wish to watch this short UK Government educational film from 1948 to reflect on how relevant the themes raised are to our world today? Consider which issues remain pertinent where you live,and how would you seek to resolve them.

Connect with others
You may want to considering joining the RTPI and the https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA).

Be prepared

Access support
Check the information on our Disability web pages so you know what you need to do. If you need any urgent additional mobility or other support to fully access all activities during your studies, contact me as your programme leader.

Get equipped
The MSc Planning and Urban Leadership programme is delivered entirely by distance learning. You do not need to attend the University campus, however you are very welcome to do so if you wish. There are student-accessible computers on all our campuses for you to use during your studies. These provide access to our core digital learning tools and any specialist software required for your course.

In order to access the course materials you will need a computer/laptop with good internet access. UWE Bristol licenses many specialist software packages for use on personal laptops for the duration of your course. If you're struggling to meet the financial demands of your course, please contact the Student Money Service team for advice and guidance.

The core software used in your course includes:

- MS Office Applications (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook, Teams)
- Autodesk (i.e. AutoCAD, Autocad Forma, Autocad 3D)
- ADOBE (i.e. Photoshop and/or Illustrator)
- ArcGIS Pro
- Minitab / Other Statistical Software

These packages will run on Windows devices, but not on Macs, tablets or Chromebooks. We recommend that you have access to a device with the following minimum specifications:

- A Windows 10 operating system (not Windows S – this will prevent you from installing the specialist software that you need).
- A processor that is at least a hyper threaded dual core (ideally a quad core).
- At least 16GB RAM (ideally 32GB).
- At least 512GB available disk space (ideally with an SSD hard drive).

See the UWE website for detailed information on choosing your IT equipment including recommended specifications.

International students
The Global Student Support Team offer information and advice to ensure you receive all the support you need to get the best from your time at UWE Bristol.

Who to contact if you have questions

For any questions about the programme, please contact me: **Dr Amir Gohar** via email at amir.gohar@uwe.ac.uk

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Please note: this information has been provided on the assumption that you will meet the conditions of your offer and be eligible to take up your place.

Entry: September 2026 Last updated: Spring 2026