

Honorary Community newsletter

BUILT FOR LIFE



Welcome to UCEM's latest update to our Honorary Award community - UCEM's Honorary and Associate Fellows, Honorary Degree recipients and Property Award winners - our community of loyal and supportive friends of UCEM.

This edition brings you up to speed on all things UCEM this winter and a progress update on our ambitious plans for the future. As ever, we welcome your feedback and comments so we can continue to evolve the newsletter. Thank you for your ongoing and steadfast support to this great institution. We wish you all the very best compliments of the festive season and a happy and prosperous 2024!



Ashley
Vice Chancellor
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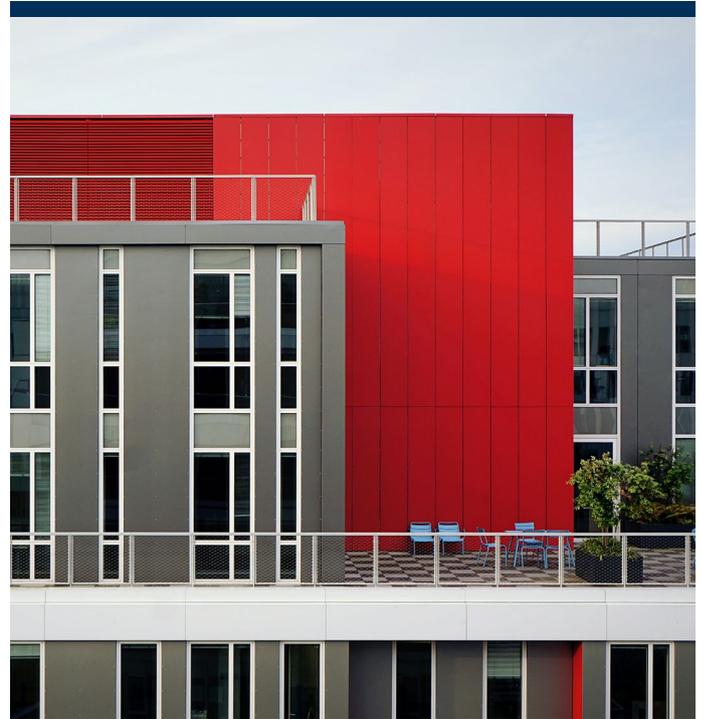


Jane
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UCEM update

It has been an extremely busy summer and autumn period since our last newsletter. Following the achievement of Indefinite Degree Awarding Powers in September 2022, UCEM now meets all Office for Students criteria for **University Title**. As part of the institution's continued evolution into a mature, independent higher education provider, UCEM is now working more progressively on re-positioning itself internally and externally as a fully-fledged university. One important step on this journey was announced on 4 December 2023 by the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Board resolved to implement a provision laid out in our Royal Charter to update the senior team job titles to better align with the higher education sector with immediate effect. As a result, Ashley became UCEM's first **Vice Chancellor**. Other members of the Executive Team have also had their job titles updated and UCEM has adopted new academic titles for the Education Team. A full Academic Career Framework will be adopted in early 2024. Alongside this, work will continue to determine a potential new name for UCEM for when we secure and launch our full university title and UCEM will continue to position itself as the 'university for the built environment' until this is complete.

Work to deliver our challenging set of **CX9 targets** for the year began in earnest from August. We are delighted to confirm that in the National Student Survey for 2023, 91.7% of UCEM non-apprenticeship respondents and 79.2% of UCEM apprenticeship respondents agreed that 'Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course', exceeding our 2022-23 CX-9 targets of 83% and 75% respectively. Our results across teaching on my course, learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, academic support, organisation and management and student voice were also exceptional and with the benchmark exceeded. These outcomes highlight the commitment of all UCEM staff to improving the student experience year on year and the hard work we have undertaken to focus on student outcomes. Our results on student outcomes are also showing consistent improvement and we delivered the best ever set of results in the Spring 2023 modules exceeding our targets overall. We have also recruited 973 new students this autumn, against a target of 910, some 543 of which



are apprentices. Our first ever cohort on the new MSc Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments is also now actively studying with us.

We are working hard on our new programme development and are delighted to announce that the business case for the **Level 7 Sustainability Business Specialist** (with integrated End Point Assessment) has now been approved for delivery from Autumn 2024. The apprenticeship utilises the existing MSc Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments with a pre-determined pathway (Leadership and Management) and the academic award title MSc Sustainability. We were also pleased to secure CIOB accreditation for the **CertHE Construction and Built Environment** in the summer with some very positive endorsement from the CIOB for the programme. We are in the process of developing other new products to come to market from autumn 2024 which will be announced in due course.

Highlights in this edition



Level 7 Sustainability Business Specialist

Delivery from Autumn 2024

APPROVED

In November 2023, we approved our new **Widening Participation Strategy**, hot on the heels of the OfS approval of our new Access and Participation Plan 2024-28. The APP is just one (regulatory) part of our much wider ambitions to widen access and participation in our programmes generally and we look forward to delivering our comprehensive plans in the coming years through a holistic institution-wide approach.

Work on our sustainability goals under the **Globe Programme** has not ceased either. In the summer we were successful in gaining ISO14001 accreditation for our Horizons office building following a two-day external audit. This standard contributes to 12 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and clearly demonstrates UCEM's commitment to the environment globally. In 2022-23 all UCEM staff were asked to complete training in Energy and Carbon as part of staff development and demonstrating our commitment to sustainability in action and build a common foundation of knowledge. We hit a 100% completion rate by the end of the year and have now also embedded this in new starter induction activities. Back in September, UCEM was successful in its application for Responsible Futures SOS-UK Host Partnership 2023-24 status. The application was focussed on the theme of alumni engagement with sustainability and will constructively align with our Responsible Futures re-accreditation and Globe activities. We have also been actively building a **culture of sustainability** internally, with various staff initiatives underway to embed sustainability as the strategic driver for UCEM. This has included the

appointment of a Sustainability Champion in every team and the hosting of a Climate and Social Action week in October. It also included an All Staff session with Craig Bennett, UCEM Honorary Doctorate holder and CEO of the Wildlife Trusts back in July to talk about all things sustainability.

UCEM has been increasing its **impact and influence** across the sector through a variety of initiatives that support us on our journey to becoming the university for the built environment. We convened an international workshop on gender equality back in September in Jordan and Egypt, part of three ongoing projects aimed at tackling gender inequality funded by research grants from the British Council. We launched **Be Part of the Change** back in October to raise awareness and challenge the lack of representation within the built environment ucem.ac.uk/be-part-of-the-change.

We entered into a partnership with Philadelphia University and Hashemite University in Jordan in November to further encourage academic collaboration, particularly with regards to research projects and our long term research ambitions for UCEM. We also co-hosted the 6th IRCIEST international conference with Batangas State University (the National Engineering University) in the Philippines where Dr Muhammad Rana gave a plenary presentation that was very well received.

Finally, our staff remain the driving force of all we do at UCEM. They are committed and hard-working so we like to offer occasions to down tools and be social and supportive, as well as collectively give back to our local community. Our designated charity is **Number 5** (a youth mental health charity based in Reading), and through November/December UCEM staff have supported the Big Give Christmas Challenge which for one week saw every donation doubled as they sought to raise £20,000 overall. We also marked World Mental Health Day as a team in October and enjoyed a visit from Mortimer Alpacas to the office in Reading. Truffle and Hugo really delighted UCEM colleagues who got to pet and feed the friendly animals. Spending time with alpacas can lead to improved morale and a sense of self-worth, which is crucial for positive mental health.



New Members of our Community in 2023



From L-R – Amanda Clack, Kee Duen Christopher Tang, Stephen Jackson, Kwok Leung Chan, Ho Ming Perry Ng, Kwok Kei Lo, Ashley Wheaton

We are delighted to announce that a number of eminent people have joined our Honorary Awards Community this year and we look forward to working with them more closely in the future and to seeing them at our upcoming events- they are listed on the next page.

The Honorary Degree, Honorary Doctorates and Honorary Fellowships were presented to recipients at the December Graduation ceremonies. The UK Associate Fellowships will be presented at the Honorary Community luncheon in May 2024.

The new Hong Kong Associate Fellows visited the UK at the end of November and were presented their certificates by the Chair of the Board at Horizons, Amanda Clack, the Vice Chair Stephen Jackson and Ashley Wheaton. We congratulate them all and welcome them to our community!

New Members of our Community in 2023

Name	Award
Bola Abisogum OBE FRICS MCIQB	Honorary MBA
Esha Bhasin	Winner Academic Excellence Award
Kwok Leung Chan MBA DipProjMan(RICS) PgD Prof Dip BSc MRICS MHKIS Member of AAPM RPS(GP)	Associate Fellow
James Doyle BSc (Hons)	Associate Fellow
John Gellatly AIIMR FRICS BA (Hons)	Honorary Fellow
Helen Gordon BSc MRICS	Winner The Property Award
Dame Judith Hackitt DBC FREng FICHEM FCGI	Honorary Doctorate
Rebecca Humphrey BSc (Hons) MRICS	Associate Fellow
Sadaqat Hussain	Winner Alumni Award
Clare Johnson MBS JP BSc FRICS	Honorary Fellow
Katie Kopec BSc (Hons)	Honorary MBA
Kwok Kei Lo BSc (Hons) MHKIS	Associate Fellow
Ho Ming Perry Ng MScSurv BSc MHKIS MRICS MAIQS RPS(QS)	Associate Fellow
Paul Morrish BA (Hons)	Honorary MBA
Andreea Plant MSc	Associate Fellow
Sandi Rhys Jones OBE FCIQB	Honorary Doctorate
Kee Duen Christopher Tang B Land Economy BSc (Hons) MA MBA MSc(IRE) MSc(IPD) PhD DI-REC MRICS MHKIS MCIREA RPS(GP)	Associate Fellow
Dennis Wong BSc (Hons) Civil Eng AP RI RSE RPE(STL) CEng MHK-IE(STL, Civil) RPS(BS) FHKIS MIStructE MRICS PMP(Tier I)Licence	Honorary Fellow

The UCEM Board of Trustees

We have had significant turnover on our Board of Trustees through 2023 and a full overview of who now sits on the Board is available [on our website](#). This year we welcomed Graeme Scott, Ros Kerslake CBE, Jon Hubert, Adam Denton onto the Board and Lucy Gaitskell and Chrystal Augustine as our newest Board Apprentices. We were very sad to say goodbye earlier this year to two Independent Trustees. Jat Brainch left us after 6 years, 3 of which were spent as Honorary Treasurer. We also said goodbye to Alastair Martin from the Duchy of Cornwall after 6 years as a Trustee - he will be very much missed around the Board table. In December we also said a fond farewell to our first ever Board Apprentices Rebekah Powley and LauraBell McMillan. We lost Alex Fraser of LIBF from the Audit Committee after serving as External Representative since the Committee's inception 6 years ago.

Finally, we said goodbye to Joe Orrell as Student Trustee in the summer and Harps Kaur as Staff Trustee in December. They all very much hope to retain their strong links with UCEM, and they remain some of our strongest advocates. We are truly grateful for the time and expertise they all gave to the institution through their roles on the Board. We will continue to have substantial Trustee turnover throughout 2024, commencing with recruitment of a new Staff Trustee and further Independent Trustees.



The UCEM Board of Trustees and Executive Team on 30 November 2023



Alastair Martin with Ashley and Amanda, leaving the UCEM Board after 6 years of service.



From L-R - UCEM's Board Apprentices - Lucy Gaitskell, Laura Bell McMillan, Chrystal Augustine and Rebekah Powley

Ten years at the helm



On 1 November 2023, Ashley reached ten years' service as Principal of UCEM. He took time in the All Staff Meeting that day to reflect on the milestone and to share cake with colleagues afterwards. He summed up his ten years in one phrase – College to University. Ashley reflected on how far UCEM had come on its road to full independence and the ongoing relevance of the institution for the future, one he remains wholly committed to. To cap off these successful ten years, Ashley was awarded Honorary RICS membership in November. This is an award that recognises the contribution of individuals to the surveying profession and has been awarded to the likes of His Majesty King Charles III, Carrie Lam and Kevin McCloud. It reflects the continued relationship between UCEM and RICS, who accredit the majority of our current programmes.

Ashley was delighted to dedicate this honour to the entire institution, acknowledging that it recognises the many thousands of successful surveying graduates that UCEM has sent out into the market over the last ten years and the role of all UCEM staff in helping them to succeed in their studies and careers.



Meet the UCEM team



Jessica Gordon-Calvert

Sustainability Education and Engagement Officer

UCEM set an ambitious target for itself - to become the world's most sustainable university. To coordinate our work on sustainability to deliver this ambition, UCEM is reliant on Jessica Gordon-Calvert, our Sustainability Education and Engagement Officer.

What is your role for UCEM?

I am the Sustainability Education & Engagement Officer here at UCEM. My primary role is to engage, collaborate and educate students on sustainability outside of their formal learning.

How long have you worked for UCEM?

Since January 2022.

How did you come to be in this role and/or why did you join UCEM?

I've been interested in sustainability ever since I was a child, and it has only grown as I've gotten older in both my personal and professional lives. Prior to UCEM I'd been working in higher

education for about 6 and a half years in student engagement. It was through my roles in this area that I worked with students from across the institution on a variety of social and environmental topics. This combined with raising a baby during the many lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic. At that time, I reflected a lot on life and the planet we live on. It gave me a renewed sense of urgency and a reminder of how important achieving a sustainable present is, as well as the future. So, I set out to find an opportunity to utilise my passion for people and planet and found UCEM in the process!

What is your favourite part of your job and what motivates you every day?

I love working with our Student Officers for Sustainability, other students, our alumni and staff on progressing UCEM's sustainability ambitions. It is a privilege to work alongside passionate people located across the world and their enthusiasm provides ample motivation throughout the working week.

What is your greatest professional achievement at UCEM so far?

Taking UCEM through its third successful Responsible Futures audit in my first 6 months has definitely been a highlight, and also introducing our Climate and Social Action Weeks as part of a UCEM community initiative.

What do you find challenging about your work?

Understanding the built environment sector and applying my skills in this

area has been an exciting challenge. I have learnt so much in the past (almost) two years and am looking forward to continuing to do so.

What's one thing that has surprised you about working for UCEM?

How welcoming and supportive everyone is. I work remotely so very rarely travel to the office in Reading but everyone I have worked with has helped build a strong sense of community and I love it when I get to see people in person.

What's next for you / your team at UCEM?

We have so many exciting things on the horizon for 2024: our fourth Responsible Futures audit, Climate and Social Action Week 2, Responsible Futures Host Partnership, Alumni Lifelong Influencing Plan and more!

What three words sum up UCEM for you?

Passionate, People, Progress

Tell us a surprising or fun fact about you!

I'm an avid book reader and love to write in my own time. Whilst studying at university, I co-wrote a pantomime adaptation of Aladdin for the Theatre Society to perform.

UCEM Online

Catch up on these key stories and events if you missed them

Don't forget the [Honorary Community webpage](#) is now live.



Property Awards 2023

We were delighted to award this year's Property Award to **Helen Gordon**, CEO of Grainger. Alongside this we presented the Alumni Award to **Sadaqat Hussain** and the Student Academic Excellence Award to **Esha Bhasin**. For more information on the award winners in 2023 and images from the day can be found on [the website](#).



Building climate competency

An article on how UCEM is leading the way in professional [visit the webpage for more information](#).



UCEM's Globe Programme

An introduction to the programme [Introducing Globe: Our Sustainability Strategy - YouTube](#).



Sustainability

Adopting a sustainability lens in everything we do - a [Q&A with Ashley Wheaton](#).



Graduation December 2023

Graduation was held on Friday 1 and Saturday 2 December and as ever was a highlight in the winter calendar. Many of our new appointees were also presented with their certificates as Honorary Fellows or as Honorary Degree Recipients.

The Honorary Awards Community

It is important to UCEM to grow the community of Honorary Award recipients and help you get to know each other better, so every edition we'll be learning more about two members of the UCEM Honorary Awards Community. In this edition we meet Craig Bennett, Honorary Doctorate recipient in 2019, and Nicola Dixon-Brown, one of our first Associate Fellows, also appointed in 2019. We asked them both some questions to help us get to know them and learn more about their connection to UCEM.



Craig Bennett
(Honorary Doctorate)

How are you connected to UCEM?

In 2019, when I was Chief Executive of Friends of the Earth, UCEM invited me to speak at their centenary event "The Built Environment of the Future" held at The Crystal in London's Docklands. It was a great event, and I was delighted to be part of it and to learn more about UCEM. At the time, I remember thinking how it would be good to be properly connected to this excellent institution somehow.

And then, later that year, I received a letter from the UCEM Principle, Ashley Wheaton, offering me an Honorary

Doctoral degree. This was such a huge honour, and I was thrilled to receive it and speak at one of UCEM's graduation ceremonies in December 2019.

What are you doing now?

Since April 2020, I've been national Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts - and I'm loving it. We're a huge federation of locally-run wildlife trusts, right across the UK, collectively representing one of the largest and most powerful conservation organisations anywhere in the world.

I also do a fair bit of lecturing on sustainability, innovation and leadership issues on Executive Education courses at several world leading universities and business schools and advise a number of companies. I'm an Honorary Professor of Sustainability and Innovation at Alliance Manchester Business School

at The University of Manchester, and an Associate Fellow of Homerton College, University of Cambridge.

What's the biggest challenge you faced in your career?

It's not particularly original to say this, but over the last few years we've entered an age of post-truth, populism and polarisation in our politics, where science and evidence, reason and logic, don't seem to matter very much anymore.

We're in the midst of a very serious climate and nature crisis, and yet evidence-based policy making, and rational political debate seems to be a thing of the past at just the moment when it is needed more than ever before.

So, rather worryingly, I sense some of the biggest challenges in my career may well be yet to come.

The Honorary Awards Community



Craig - second from the left, receiving his Honorary Doctorate in 2019

What is your greatest professional achievement so far?

I'm very proud of the Bees Campaign that we ran at Friends of the Earth. It achieved real 'cut-through' with the public and got people thinking about nature in a positive and upbeat way at a time when a lot of people were quite downbeat after the failure of the UN climate talks in Copenhagen in 2009.

A lot of colleagues thought I'd lost it when I proposed it, but it created a new, fresh, and positive environmental narrative at exactly the right moment and helped grow and strengthen public engagement and action on the wider environmental agenda as a direct result.

What is your best memory of UCEM?

It is undoubtedly the Graduation Ceremony at which I received my Honorary Doctorate and was invited to address the graduands. It was a very special day for me, with my parents, wife and children all present.

I actually did my undergraduate degree at The University of Reading, and that is also where I met my wife, so we marked the UCEM occasion

with a visit to Sweeney and Todd pie shop afterwards for old time sake - it was the perfect end to a lovely day.

What three words sum up UCEM for you?

Buildings, environment, online.

If you could have done any other job for just one day what would it have been?

I feel very confident that I would be a very good television travel presenter, perhaps in the style of Simon Reeve, or Michael Palin. I absolutely love travel, meeting people, and exploring new places and cultures, and particularly love slow travel (i.e. not flying) for obvious reasons. And I love sharing my enthusiasm for this with others.

There is still a part of me that hopes to do it one day, but I fear I may have too many grey hairs now!

If you could meet anyone in the world, dead or alive who would it be and why?

Probably Nelson Mandela. The wisdom, empathy, compassion and leadership he demonstrated as the first President of a democratic South Africa, where he reached out and built bridges to the white community despite everything that had been before, was truly remarkable.

What is the first thing you would buy if you won the lottery?

We own a lovely Edwardian townhouse in central Cambridge, and have done a lot to make it more energy efficient. The next step required is to replace the lovely original sash windows with some heritage-appropriate double or triple

glazing, perhaps a bit of solid wall insulation, and only then is it worth us thinking about replacing the gas boiler with a heat pump. But, goodness, it's going to cost a lot to do it properly!

Follow Craig on X: @craigbennett3

The Honorary Awards Community



Nicola Dixon-Brown
(Associate Fellow)

How are you connected to UCEM?

I am a proud alumni and Associate Fellow of UCEM. I studied on the distance learning course back in 2008 whilst working full time in my first surveying role.

What are you doing now?

I work at The Crown Estate on the Regional portfolio which comprises 13 retail parks, three shopping centres and one leisure destination.

I have quite a varied role. I provide strategic oversight to ensure we are delivering the best possible property management service to our Customers, working closely with our Managing Agents to drive operational performance, customer service excellence and visitor experience. I also seek out opportunities to improve efficiency & consistency, helping to build our shared London & Regional operational platform.

What's the biggest challenge you faced in your career?

With three kids to deal with and a busy role, im often having to juggle a lot of things. Im lucky enough to work with such great colleagues, who

allow me to do both to the best of my ability!

What is your greatest professional achievement so far?

The sustainability work I did 7 or so years ago which culminated in me winning the RICS Young Surveyor of the Year Award, Property & Asset Management Class (2017) and subsequently the UCEM Alumni Award (2018).

This was a real pivotal point in my career when I'd just moved into the world of retail. The company I was working for gave me the chance to put my own mark on the assets I was managing. For a particular client, I focused on delivering an enhanced biodiversity and waste management scheme whilst also improving social value through community projects.

What is your best memory of UCEM?

Two things come to mind.

The lifelong friends it brought. Even only meeting in person once or twice a term, it's amazing how close a community our year group was.

Secondly, the grounding and building blocks it provided me with on the educational front. The teaching at UCEM was, and still is exemplary and visionary. UCEM puts its students at the forefront of everything it does providing accessible and flexible platforms of education - whilst laying the foundations for future leaders through its varied, dynamic and progressive curriculum. I couldn't be more proud to represent them as an Associate Fellow.



What three words sum up UCEM for you?

Progressive. Inspirational. Leadership.

If you could have done any other job for just one day what would it have been?

I'd love to have been a marine biologist but sea sickness put a stop to that!

I've always been fascinated by the abyss and those wierd and wonderful fish that live in the dark with their physical adaptations.

I would love to go down there one day and see it for myself!

If you could meet anyone in the world, dead or alive who would it be and why?

Tina Turner! What a force of nature.

What is the first thing you would buy if you won the lottery?

I would set up a science lab and workshop for my son to allow him to explore his talent for inventions.

Forthcoming occasions and events



UCEM's third Built Environment Apprenticeship Awards

8 February 2024 in London

Save the date



Honorary Awards Community luncheon 2024

Thursday 2 May 2024

Ironmongers Hall in London

Formal invitations to follow in January!



Save the date

Property Award 2024

Thursday 10 October 2024



Graduation June 2024

Saturday 6 July 2024

Town Hall Reading

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If you have any suggestions for the UCEM Honorary Community newsletter, or would like to contribute please email Lyndsay Hughes at l.hughes@ucem.ac.uk.