

Postgraduate Diploma Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments

Programme Specification 2026–
2027

Version: 6.00

Status: Final

Date: 08/05/2026

Summary Programme Details

Final Award

Award: Postgraduate Diploma
Title of (final) Programme: Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments
Credit points: 120
Level of award: 7

Intermediate award(s)*

Intermediate award 1: Postgraduate Certificate Sustainable Building and Property Studies
Credit points: 60
Level of award: 7

*Intermediate awards will be granted to students that exit the programme part way through if they have achieved sufficient credits in line with the [Academic and Programme Regulations \(opens new window\)](#).

Validation

Validating institution: University of the Built Environment
Date of last validation: February 2023
Date of next periodic review: February 2028
Date of commencement of first delivery: September 2023
Duration: 1.5 years
Maximum period of registration: In accordance with the [Academic and Programme Regulations \(opens new window\)](#).
UCAS Code/ HECoS Code: N/A / 100150
Programming Code: PDIPSES
Other coding as required: N/A

Professional accreditation / recognition

None

QAA Guidance

[UK Quality Code for Higher Education \(opens new window\)](#)

[QAA Credit Framework for England \(opens a new window\)](#)

[Quality Assurance Agency \(QAA\) Subject Benchmark Statement: Land, Construction, Real Estate and Surveying April 2024 \(opens new window\)](#)

OfS Standards

[Office for Students \(OfS\) Sector Recognised Standards \(opens a new window\)](#)

Programme Overview

Rationale

The Postgraduate Diploma Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments is for students wishing to undertake a selection of modules from the MSc Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments programme and sits within the University of the Built Environment's broader long term sustainability strategy.

This programme is primarily aimed at experienced employees in industry seeking to gain additional specialist knowledge or CPD in new areas.

Entry Requirements

Entrants to this programme normally are required to have attained one of the following:

- a Bachelor's Degree with honours at upper second standard (2:1) as a minimum, or equivalent;

Or

- a Bachelor's degree with honours at lower second standard (2:2) as a minimum, or equivalent and be employed in a relevant role;

Or

- a Bachelor's Degree, or equivalent, plus three years' experience in a relevant field;

Or

- a Level 5 qualification as defined by Framework for Higher Education Qualifications for England, Wales, and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) plus 5 years' relevant experience;

Or

- a professional qualification plus 5 years' relevant experience, two of which should be at senior management level.

All applicants will be required to provide a detailed personal statement and a reference or letter of support from an employer or mentor to support the application. An interview with a member of the programme team will also be required prior to acceptance onto the course.

If an applicant does not meet the standard entry requirements University of the Built Environment will consider the application on an individual basis. In these cases, the application will be assessed by the Programme Leader or for students

Postgraduate Diploma Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments Programme Specification

in Hong Kong by the Dean (Academic Portfolio and International), who will give careful consideration to any professional and life experiences as well as any academic or vocational qualifications the applicant may hold.

Applications are assessed in accordance with the University of the Built Environment [Code of Practice: Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning \(opens new window\)](#).

English language requirements

All University of the Built Environment programmes are taught and assessed in English. The applicant will therefore be required to demonstrate adequate proficiency in the language before being admitted to a course:

- GCSE Grade 4 (or c) or above in English Language or English Literature, or an equivalent qualification. For further information on equivalent qualifications please contact: admissions@ube.ac.uk
- Grade 6.0 or above, with at least 6.0 in the reading and writing modules, in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) academic test administered by the British Council.
- 88 or above in the Internet option, 230 or above in the computer-based option or 570 or above in the paper-based option, of the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) test.
- Grade 4 (or C) or above in English (Language or Literature) at A/S Level.
- HKDSE (Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education) Grade 3, or HKALE (Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination – Advanced Level & Advanced Supplementary Level) Grade E, or HKCEE (Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination) Grade 3–5 or Grade A–D (Syllabus B only).

Applicants with a bachelor's degree that has been taught and examined in the English medium can be considered for entry in the absence of the qualifications detailed above if applying for a non-apprenticeship programme.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) or recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL) routes into the programme

University of the Built Environment policy and procedures for Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) are set out in the University of the Built Environment [Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy \(opens new window\)](#). This policy statement takes precedence in any such decision.

Postgraduate Diploma Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments Programme Specification

Note: As this is a new programme, recognition of prior learning for the award of credit and credit transfer will not be available initially.

Programme Progression

For details of progression arrangements, please view the [Academic and Programme Regulations \(opens new window\)](#).

Award Regulations

For details of award arrangements, please view the [Academic and Programme Regulations \(opens new window\)](#).

Career Prospects

This programme supports students in furthering their professionalism within industry and will enhance their career path opportunities. It is designed for those leading, or with aspirations to lead, and with the agency to bring about change regarding sustainability.

It also enables students to decide whether to progress to a full Masters programme and then into careers including:

- Director/lead/manager of Sustainability;
- Director/lead/manager of Technical Sustainability;
- Director/lead/manager of Sustainability Quality Systems;
- Director/lead/manager of Sustainable Development;
- Director/lead/manager of Sustainability Strategy;
- Director/lead/manager of Operational Sustainability;
- Director/lead/manager of Project Sustainability.

Programme Aims

Programme aims

The programme is designed for holders of a Bachelor's degree or equivalent to study a postgraduate award that is designed to ignite critical thinking around sustainability, to initiate change within firms operating within the built environment and is directed to those with organisational agency. Thinking innovatively and understanding how to challenge and change to improve sustainability is central to the programme. The programme will give students the

Postgraduate Diploma Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments Programme Specification

knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead change within their own organisation and more widely within the industry.

The programme also prepares students with a foundation for further professional development and extension of their knowledge, in preparation for further academic study, including completion of a Master's award.

Market and internationalisation

This programme is aimed at a UK and broad international audience. However, it has as its basis UK law and regulatory controls.

Where possible, the programme aims to utilise international case studies and draw upon global challenges, along with international codes and conventions.

Programme Structure

Module List

Code	Module	Level	Credits	Core/ Elective
SUS7PAR	Paradigms of Sustainability	7	20	Core
SUS7REA	Realities of Sustainability	7	20	Core
SUS7MPT	Sustainable Materials, Processes and Technologies	7	20	Core
SUS7INF	Sustainable Infrastructure	7	20	Core
SUS7OPS	Operationalising Sustainability	7	20	Elective
SUS7INQ	Institutional Quality for Sustainability	7	20	Elective
SUS7SBC	Sustainable Buildings and Cities	7	20	Elective

Notes

Credits are part of the Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS). Two UK credits are equivalent to one European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credit.

Learning Outcomes

Having successfully completed the programme, the student will have met the following learning outcomes.

A – Knowledge and understanding

Learning Outcomes	Relevant modules
A7.1 Develop a critical awareness of the key theoretical and conceptual approaches to the study of sustainability in the built environment as informed by research and practice.	SUS7PAR
A7.2 Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the relationship between infrastructure and sustainability in the built environment, including the processes materials and technologies which will play a role in building a more sustainable built environment.	SUS7INF SUS7MPT
A7.3 Critically analyse the changes, opportunities and challenges internationally, nationally and locally and within government and business sectors which influence sustainability in the built environment.	SUS7OPS SUS7REA

B – Intellectual skills

Learning Outcomes	Relevant modules
B7.1 Analyse real-world scenarios and challenges and develop and communicate alternative ways of dealing with these, including the critical evaluation of these alternatives.	SUS7REA

C – Subject practical skills

Learning Outcomes		Relevant modules
C7.1	Critically understand how to embed sustainability practices within a range of organisational contexts through leadership and management to achieve meaningful change.	SUS7REA SUS7OPS
C7.2	Consistently apply subject-specific knowledge and integrate theory and practice, making informed decisions to deal with complex situations of sustainability in the built environment.	SUS7INF SUS7OPS
C7.3	Demonstrate an international perspective regarding the impact and responsibility of built environment professionals on business, societies and the environment.	SUS7REA SUS7INQ SUS7SBC

D – Key / Transferable skills

Learning Outcomes		Relevant modules
D7.1	Communicate ideas, arguments and information in clear, effective and reasoned ways in written (using technically proficient English) and spoken formats.	All modules
D7.2	Demonstrate proactivity and originality in problem structuring and problem-solving, and the ability to act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level.	All Module Assessments

Delivery Structure

Autumn (UK) Entry

Year 1, Semester 1: Changing Your Mindset

Module Code	Module Name	Level
SUS7PAR	Paradigms of Sustainability	7
SUS7REA	Realities of Sustainability	7

Year 1, Semester 2: Foundations of Sustainability

Module Code	Module Name	Level
SUS7MPT	Sustainable Materials, Processes and Technologies	7
SUS7INF	Sustainable Infrastructure	7

Year 2, Semester 1: choose two modules

Module Code	Module Name	Level
SUS7OPS	Operationalising Sustainability	7
SUS7INQ	Institutional Quality for Sustainability	7
SUS7SBC	Sustainable Buildings and Cities	7

Module Summaries

Core Modules

SUS7PAR Paradigms of Sustainability

This module introduces the topic of sustainability in the context of the built environment and how it might be conceptualized theoretically (thus complementing the Realities of Sustainability module). It will be essential to understand the ontological and epistemological assumptions being made around sustainability themes, together with what is being privileged, and the level of understanding sought. Candidates will be introduced to a range of different approaches for understanding sustainable innovation, change and their role. The module will challenge the assumptions and themes often privileged regarding built environment sustainability e.g., triple bottom line. The drivers of sustainability such as the United Nations sustainable development goals associated with the built environment, will be used as key touch points. The module will go into further depth in areas such as cultural and social sustainability, economic and financial sustainability and environmental sustainability, bio-diversity and climate change. By the end of the module the candidates will have a critical understanding of the triple bottom line of sustainability within the built environment and how it impacts the wider world.

SUS7REA Realities of Sustainability

This module develops a student's skill in identifying the difference between fact and fiction while dealing with sustainability. This module is based on two critical aspects of master's level education. The first is the ability to synthesise, analyse and critically review data and sources of information used in practice. The second major component of this module is communicating and conveying information at

Postgraduate Diploma Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments Programme Specification

master's level, involving academic writing, editing and synthesis of data and information, and being able to record findings distinctly and accurately for dissemination. Live case studies will be used to understand the realities of sustainability in practice.

SUS7MPT Sustainable Materials, Processes and Technologies

This module will introduce the current diverse discourse around materials, processes and technologies (MPT) which may play a role in delivering a more sustainable built environment.

The module will draw upon a socio-technical perspective recognising the range of stakeholders and agendas in achieving the uptake of such sustainable MPTs. Central to the module will be how to conceptualise MPT, such as from the management fashion school and that the sector both shapes MPT and yet is also shaped by MPT. Relevant MPT may include natural/carbon zero materials (including debates around embodied carbon), management or production processes to improve sustainability and also the range of emerging technologies and the role they might play and how stakeholders and sector can be prepared. The digital agenda (industry 4.0) and its' connection with the current discourse around what are described as modern methods, off site, robotics, light weight and natural structures will play a central role. Emerging concepts yet established, and in their infancy, will be introduced.

SUS7INF Sustainable Infrastructure

This module will introduce the infrastructure society uses and needs in the context of the built environment. It will cover the major constituents which make our towns and cities function and their relationship and role in the sustainability agenda. Key areas covered include community infrastructure, transport, water, waste, digital infrastructure and the natural environment. Attention is also given to the relationship the built environment has with power sources including gas, electric, solar, wind, and others in terms of sustainability challenges. The module will seek to present a holistic and open system view of infrastructure, drawing upon the concept of towns and cities acting with a metabolism.

Elective Modules

SUS7OPS Operationalising Sustainability

This module will introduce the practices and logics relevant to organisations operating in the built environment sector associated with becoming sustainable. The module will critique a contextual approach to the uptake of sustainable practices for organisations and the leadership and management skills needed. Key areas covered will include future studies and trends around sustainability,

Postgraduate Diploma Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments Programme Specification

visions toward 2050, sustaining a firm's competitiveness over time, HRM practices to sustain a workforce including issues around diversity, inclusion, race, bullying, and sexism. Central to the module will be the theme of change, innovation and adaptation to sustain a stakeholder organisation. Attention will also be given to understanding the economic and finance models of today and future alternatives that may impact sustainability on the international stage.

SUS7INQ Institutional Quality for Sustainability

This module will address the issues of standards for sustainability including BREEAM and LEED. It will cover the major regulations, UNSDG, ESD guidance, ISO14001, ethics and how these might be put into practice. Further, the module will at times take a critical view, what should be measured, how and by whom. Challenges around how we might better address issues of quality in the short and long terms around sustainability will be debated. Students will master the key institutional logics around quality which impact sustainability. By the end of the module the students will have a critical understanding of the institutional quality agenda around sustainability.

SUS7SBC Sustainable Buildings and Cities

This module will introduce technical sustainability in terms of our current buildings and existing towns and cities influenced by national and global agendas. With much of the narrative around sustainability focussed upon new build, it is our existing buildings and the towns and cities they make up where many sustainability challenges reside. The module looks at a range of approaches to address such challenges such as retrofitting, analysis and adaptation modelling, building flexibility, maintenance and BMS.

Attention is also given to the scale and long-term challenges this presents and how to tackle this in a staged and inclusive manner.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and Teaching

Knowledge and understanding

The teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the programme is guided by the University-wide Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS). The approach adopted is student-centred learning design, that supports the educational needs of our diverse student community. Learning has been designed with flexibility in mind to support students to adopt their own learning experience best suited to their needs.

Postgraduate Diploma Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments Programme Specification

Students are taught through online learning resources available to them, including customised text material, study papers, learning activities and interactive media. These are complemented by a variety of Lecturer-facilitated sessions and interactions, using a range of media for enhancement of the learning experience.

Students are taught in an online environment, with 'live' lecture delivering adaptable knowledge transfer in real time, or as a recording. These sessions are supported by learning activities, interactive digital resources and real-life scenarios that enhance the learning experience.

Module delivery incorporates a range of subject appropriate resources suitable for the online learner. This may include, but is not limited to, audio-visual presentations, interactive case studies and online journals.

Students are required to undertake their own research beyond the material provided and undertake self-directed learning throughout their programme as directed to become independent learners.

Intellectual skills

Learning and teaching methods are applied to enable the development of industry practice, research skills and academic literacy. These skills are developed through synchronous and asynchronous research informed teaching, interaction with multi-media learning resources, self-directed learning and via participation in lecturer, and student-centred learning activities. Assessment is guided by University of the Built Environment academics, utilising multiple assessment types and methods, as part of formative and summative assessment, to develop students' assessment literacy.

Students are encouraged to develop and apply their knowledge and understanding through independent and collaborative learning exercises, online activities and engagement with digital resources.

Subject practical skills

The programme introduces key subject themes of the theoretical assumptions and foundations surrounding sustainability. That is tensioned against the realities of trying to enact sustainability in practice, what that might mean and a range of case study projects. This will offer students the opportunity to *reset* their outlook regarding all aspects associated with sustainability. Changing one's mindset and understanding is a key practical skill for leaders seeking to change and improve around sustainability.

Following this, more tangible and objective skills are covered including sustainable materials, processes and technologies and the challenge of uptake.

Postgraduate Diploma Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments Programme Specification

Additional practical skills will cover the infrastructure used by the built environment and understanding how that can be made more sustainable.

The programme then offers three elective modules, each of which focuses upon different types of professional roles within the built environment. These include; Leadership and Management, Technical and Quality.

Key/Transferable skills

The BE Ready Orientation sets out the importance of transferable skills. These skills are developed through the programme, utilising study, and assessment. This can be via virtual learning environment (VLE) discussion, tuition discussion, problem-solving exercises, which are conducted individually or in groups, and coursework, which provides the ideal combination to internalise these aspects through different learning methods. The Study Skills area of the VLE is a further resource for support in developing these skills.

The learning activities in this programme require students to undertake research, evaluate their findings and develop solutions. The teaching of module topics requires students' engagement with a range of online activities that develop research and evaluation skills and cultivate a systematic approach to problem solving. Engagement with the University of the Built Environment learning community develops communication and collaboration skills. Additional support for transferrable skills is delivered via the joint programme webinars delivered to the student throughout the year. Students also have the opportunity to develop transferrable skills through formative and summative opportunities within the modules.

Assessment

The assessment strategy for the programme is guided by the University of the Built Environment-wide Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS 2020-2025). The aim of University of the Built Environment's assessments is to allow students an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned using a range of formats and which encourage critical self-reflection linked to personal development. To support this, assessments are clearly related to module learning outcomes and the activities within the module support students in achieving these.

University of the Built Environment's practice is to require assessments to be vocationally and professionally relevant. Assessments are built that have direct application to industry standards, and that enable students to learn through real world scenarios and working practice. This involves the generation of tasks based on problems, scenarios or case studies from recent real-world situations that reflect and/or replicate the vocational requirements of the industry and the

Postgraduate Diploma Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments Programme Specification

international nature of the subject matter. All elements of assessments are discipline-specific for each programme as well as supporting the acquisition and promotion of transferable skills, including research skills development.

Formative assessment and feedback opportunities are provided throughout the programme in a variety of formats to motivate, guide and develop students through their learning. Students are required to complete various pieces of coursework in the modules which are assessed within set time frames. Detailed feedback is provided on lecturer-assessed work, which explains how the mark was derived, what was done well and what could be improved for future assessments. Objective testing is also utilised in formative (including self-assessment) and summative assessment. Individual projects in the final stage are assessed in accordance with their own guidelines and marking schemes.

All assessment contributing to award is subject to moderation policies.

Moderation at University of the Built Environment is designed to reflect the quality of the student submission and the benchmark standards for the various levels of undergraduate study. Moderation of marking accords with QAA recommended best practice to ensure that marking criteria have been fairly, accurately, and consistently applied during first marking.

Assessment Diet

The purpose of BE Ready is to prepare students for online learning with University of the Built Environment but also to support students throughout their learning journey. Students are expected to visit BE Ready every semester for updates, welcome back week activities as well as advice specific to their level of study.

There are a variety of resources which will help students to get started. These include how to use the VLE, how to navigate a module, the University of the Built Environment e-library and how to join a webinar. BE Ready also provides practical advice such as how to manage independent study, where to find our Study Skills resources and how to access academic or pastoral support. All this information is key to having a successful start to supported online learning with the University.

Resources are available to support students with referencing and how to develop good academic practice to avoid academic misconduct. A range of study skills support materials are available to apprentices.

Study Support

BE Ready Orientation

The purpose of BE Ready is to prepare students for online learning with the University but also to support students throughout their learning journey. Students are expected to visit BE Ready every semester for updates, welcome back week activities as well as advice specific to their level of study.

There are a variety of resources which will help students to get started. These include how to use the VLE, how to navigate a module, the University e-library and how to join a webinar. BE Ready also provides practical advice such as how to manage independent study, where to find our Study Skills resources and how to access academic or pastoral support. All this information is key to having a successful start to supported online learning with the University of the Built Environment.

Resources are available to support students with referencing and how to develop good academic practice to avoid academic misconduct. A range of study skills support materials are available to apprentices.

Student learning support

The programme is taught via the University of the Built Environment's VLE and academic facilitation and support is provided online giving student's access to the University Lecturers and other students worldwide.

The Education team will guide and support students' learning. Furthermore, all students who do not engage with initial assessment or the VLE will receive additional support from the Programme Team. Other the University administrative teams provide support for assessments and technical issues including ICT. University of the Built Environment's VLE provides the main point of contact for students for these teams throughout the duration of their programme.

Each student, wherever their location, will have access to a wealth of library and online materials to support their studies. International students are able to use their local context when writing their assessments.

The Academic Support and Enhancement (ASET) team works with departments to promote student retention, achievement and success. This work is achieved through a multi-faceted approach, which consists of:

- delivering support tutorials to students identified as academically at risk to develop the academic skills needed for success;

Postgraduate Diploma Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments Programme Specification

- developing 'self-serve' support resources to enable students to develop their academic skills;
- delivering teaching webinars and drop-in sessions on academic skills;
- working with the Education team and other support teams to identify ways in which student success can be further facilitated.

Relevant research is also carried out to inform proactive interventions, and to develop policy and practice.

Disability, neurodiversity, and wellbeing related support is provided via a dedicated Disability and Welfare team at University of the Built Environment.

English language support

For those students whose first language is not English, or those students who wish to develop their English language skills, additional support is provided through online resources on the VLE in the resource 'Developing Academic Writing'.

The resource includes topics such as sentence structure, writing essays and guidance for writing at Master's level aimed at developing students' study skills.

Personal and professional development

Students are undertaking vocational programmes that are intrinsically linked to the accrediting professional bodies. Students are encouraged and supported to understand the need for the recognition of these bodies and guided as to how to meet the professional membership requirements.

More generally, the University has a dedicated Careers Advisor to ensure students have appropriate access to careers education, information, advice and guidance.

Programme specific support

Each programme has a Programme Leader, as well as Module Leaders, Module Lecturers and Academic Support Tutors to support the students throughout their time with the Programme.

The University of the Built Environment staff are accessible during normal UK working hours, during which they also monitor the 24/7 forums asynchronously and provide encouragement, assistance and necessary tutor and student feedback services.

Access to the University of the Built Environment e-Library is on a 24/7 basis and the University has a full-time librarian during normal UK working hours.