



Research Skills and Current Affairs

Module Descriptor

Module Code:	SUS7RSC
Version:	V4.00
Status:	Final
Date:	12/08/2025

Summary Module Details

Module details

Module Title: Research Skills and Current Affairs

Module Leader: Dr Hazel Ann Nash

Module Mode: Supported online learning

Semester: Spring (UK)

Level: 7

Credits: 10

Learning Hours: 100

Contact & Study Hours

Directed Study Time: 16.5 hrs (16.5%)

Self-directed Study Time: 83.5 hrs (83.5%)

Assessment Type

Coursework: 100%

Module Summary

This module will enable students to develop the research skills required to navigate the evolving sustainability discourses from academia and practice, whilst informing their own Final Project (students will be made aware of the options available to them for semester 4 and the Final Project). Essential to the module will be understanding how to recognise assumptions, theoretical underpinnings, bias and what is and is not being privileged in various publication types. The fundamental assumptions upon which social science is founded will be outlined and debated. An understanding of level of analysis, micro, meso and macro will be explained. This will help students develop their critical thinking along with understanding the perspectives that make most sense to them. Operational practices around how to undertake research; forming a robust question, alternative approaches, along with data types and methods of data collection and analysis will be discussed.

Taken on which Programmes

MSc Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments (C)*

Core (C) or Elective (E)

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*This module is a pre-requisite for the Final Project Proposal (SUS7PRP) and must be studied before starting Year 2.

Module Aims

This module aims to equip students with the necessary understanding, knowledge and skills to formulate a research problematic. This will be done through developing skills of critique around the current body of academic and grey (current affairs) literatures associated with sustainability.

Module Learning Outcomes

- LO1. To have an understanding of what constitutes knowledge.
- LO2. To identify how knowledge is created and the methods available.
- LO3. To critique current affairs associated with sustainability through a rigorous understanding of a range of data collection and analysis techniques.
- LO4. Prepare students to implement research skills for future research projects (e.g. Final Project Proposal and Final Research Dissertation or Work-Based Project).

Indicative Module Content

Module topics

- Knowledge fundamentals – ontology, epistemology and methodology
- Research problematic
- Research objective
- Research aims and objectives
- Research design
- Primary and secondary data – collection
- Data analysis, findings and contribution to knowledge
- Critique of research and current affairs using the above as touchpoints
- Current and evolving discourse of sustainability

This content will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the legal, moral and financial changes in professional standards and practice.

Overview of Summative Assessment

Module learning outcomes	Assessment	Word count or equivalent	Weighting
LO1, LO2	Assessment 1 Critique of research skills (e.g. critique a seminal research paper)	1,000 (word count equivalent)	40%
LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4	Assessment 2 Briefing style video submission on approaches to sustainability research.	1,500 words max	60%

Module Pass Mark (as a weighted average of all assessments): 50%

Key Module Learning Resources

Core Sources and Texts

The core reading resources within each module will be provided via the specific Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) module pages and within the e-Library. Additional reference material and supplementary resources to support your studies are available through the University e-Library.

Module tools

Students will have access to study materials, dedicated academic support, student forums, and learning activities via an online learning platform (VLE).

The module page on the VLE is broken down into structured study weeks to help students plan their time, with each week containing a mixture of reading, case studies, videos/recordings and interactive activities to go through. Online webinars/seminars led by the Module Leader can be attended in real time and provide opportunities to consolidate knowledge, ask questions, discuss topics and work through learning activities together. These sessions are recorded to support students who cannot attend and to enable students to recap the session and work through it at their own pace. Module forums on the VLE provide further opportunities

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to discuss topics with other students, complete collaborative work and get extra help from the module team.

Professional online resources

The e-Library provides access to trusted, quality online resources, selected by subject specialists, to support students' study. This includes journals, industry publications, magazines, academic books and a dissertation/work-based library. For a list of the key industry specific and education resources available please visit [the VLE e-Library](#).

Other relevant resources

Access is also provided to further information sources that include the British Library and Open University UK catalogues, as well as providing a monthly current awareness service entitled, **Knowledge Foundations** – a compendium of news, research and resources relating to the educational sector and the Built Environment.

The module resource list is available on the module VLE page and is updated regularly to ensure materials are relevant and current.