

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

for the award of

MSc in Environmental Impact Assessment and Management

Managed by the Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment

delivered by School of the Built Environment

Date approved:	November 2018
Applies to students commencing study in:	September 2020

RECORD OF UPDATES

Date amended	Nature of amendment	Reason for amendment
29.09.2020	Confirmation of accreditation of RICS	

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Awarding body:	Oxford Brookes University
Teaching institution and location:	Oxford Brookes University, Headington Campus
Language of study:	English
Final award/s:	MSc
Programme title:	Environmental Impact Assessment and Management
Interim exit awards and award titles available:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Impact Assessment and Management (PG Dip) ▪ Post Graduate Certificate in Environmental Impact Assessment and Management (PG Cert)
Brookes course code:	MSC-EIM
UCAS code:	N/A
JACS code:	K420 (TBC)
HECoS code:	100199 (TBC)
Mode of delivery:	Full-time (on-campus) Part-time (open learning)
Duration of study:	Full-time (1 year) or Open Learning (2 years). Both full-time and part-time students can, with approval, extend their study to the maximum of 5 years allowed under the University PG regulations.
Subject benchmark statement/s which apply to the programme:	There are no relevant postgraduate subject benchmark statements, but the following has been used as a reference point: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-town-and-country-planning-16.pdf?sfvrsn=9496f781_10
Professional accreditation attached to the programme:	Accredited by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors http://www.rics.org/ Seeking accreditation from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Royal Town Planning Institute http://www.rtpi.org.uk (to provide partial exemption from the educational requirements of Membership to the RTPI)
Apprenticeship Standard:	N/A
University Regulations:	The programme conforms to the University Regulations for the year of entry as published/archived at: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/

SECTION 2: WHY STUDY THIS PROGRAMME?

Environmental Impact Assessment and Management (EIA&M) centres upon the detailed appraisal of the environmental and social effects of major development projects across their lifecycle, from 'cradle to grave'. Over 140 countries are known to have a regulatory EIA system in place, whilst International Finance Institutions (e.g. the World Bank / IFC; EBRD; Asian Development Bank) require Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) for lending linked to development projects, as do more than 90 commercial 'Equator Principles' investment banks, covering over 70% of international project finance debt in emerging markets. The need to replace aging infrastructure in developed countries, combined with rapid urbanisation and development in emerging economies, has led to a significant demand for professionals with the requisite knowledge and skillset to work effectively in this growth industry.

The MSc EIA&M programme has been developed in close consultation with leading practitioners to create an innovative course which reflects the latest conceptual thinking and international best-practice in the sector, responding to the following key industry drivers:

- (i) The requirement for graduates to work collaboratively within multi-disciplinary teams - managing, creating, and applying knowledge drawn from diverse stakeholders and the public to devise effective EIA&M solutions;
- (ii) The call to deliver effective and proportionate Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA / ESIs) to assist decision-making for major development proposals and to manage their ongoing performance, thus maximising opportunities to realise sustainable outcomes;
- (iii) The need to remain abreast of new and evolving concepts in environmental and social risk management that represent the 'new frontiers' of environmental decision-making (e.g. ecosystem services, the natural capital approach, and the circular economy); and
- (iv) Calls for more 'intelligent' EIA&M - i.e. the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to harness new opportunities for stakeholder interaction and engagement with development proposals, assessment information, and the ongoing management of impacts.

How can the course be studied?

The course is available as both a one year full-time programme and in part-time open learning study mode (normally taken over two years, extendable up to a maximum of 5 years). Modules can be taken on-campus (i.e. face-to-face) or in 'open learning' mode, using a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to deliver a flexible study programme that is accessible to working professionals and home / international students. Our experience in the School of the Built Environment in delivering postgraduate open learning has also demonstrated the effectiveness of a 'blended' approach whereby part-time open learners can attend the University for Intensive Study Periods (once per semester, typically lasting 3 days).

How is the course structured?

The full MSc programme comprises four core modules (4 x 30 credits) that address the key themes identified above, plus research methods (10 credits) and a final dissertation (50 credits). For individuals not wishing to commit to the full MSc, the **PG Certificate** (2 x 30 credit core modules) and **PG Diploma** (4 x 30 credit core modules) awards are also available. Furthermore, the core modules are entirely self-contained so that students may enter (start) the program either in September or January.

What will be distinctive about the learning experience?

The programme adopts a collaborative approach to learning and teaching, working closely with practitioners both in the private and public sectors, community groups, and other academics and professionals in the field. The contribution of our own multi-disciplinary [teaching team](#)¹ will be interspersed with input from a variety of guest speakers with direct personal experience of EIA&M, both nationally and internationally. A rich and topical learning experience is therefore facilitated by the combination of insights from practice, our own more academic framing and [research experience](#)², and guided working on diverse case studies drawn from around the world. Furthermore, important opportunities for peer-to-peer learning are also enabled during the Intensive Study Periods and the UK residential field trip, both of which are delivered simultaneously to the full-time and open-learning student cohorts.

¹ Staff profiles can be viewed at: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/be/about/staff/>

² <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/be/research/research-groups/impact-assessment/>

Who is the course aimed at?

The programme is targeted at individuals seeking to develop a career as practitioners working in environmental consultancy, local government, regulatory agencies, statutory consultees, environmental NGOs, major development companies and construction and civil-engineering firms, both nationally and internationally. Course participants are likely to include:

- Recent graduates (e.g. geography, environmental / natural sciences, social sciences) seeking a career-oriented PG degree, and graduates in allied fields e.g. planning, construction / civil engineering and surveying;
- Early-career practitioners recruited for a technical specialism (e.g. acoustics, hydrogeology) but requiring development of their wider knowledge base;
- Mid-career practitioners looking to upskill and further specialise in EIA&M; and
- Graduates or professionals seeking to retrain and change career direction

SECTION 3: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the programme, graduates will demonstrate the following Brookes Attributes:

3.1 ACADEMIC LITERACY

1. Critically appraise key concepts and tools of Environmental Impact Assessment and Management, evaluating their relationship with development planning and decision-making processes, including the potential to realise sustainable outcomes.
2. Interpret and analyse policy and practice frameworks that are influential in shaping the performance of EIA/ESIA and Management, both nationally and internationally.
3. Employ a range of conceptual, analytical and practical techniques to work collaboratively and effectively with diverse stakeholders and disciplines within the context of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA/ESIA) and Management.
4. Synthesise and critically review the breadth of knowledge surrounding contemporary debates and evolving concepts in environmental and social risk management and decision-making.
5. Identify, apply, and critically evaluate the role of ICT in the production and communication of information within EIA/ESIA and the development project decision-making process.

3.2 RESEARCH LITERACY

1. Recognise the diverse nature of knowledge and processes of 'knowledge co-production' in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA/ESIA) and Management, appreciating the distinction between interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research and practice.
2. Identify, synthesise, and critically evaluate data for use in supporting decision-making processes within the context of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA/ESIA) and Management.
3. Identify, evaluate and plan the use of appropriate methods of research and appraisal for analysing and solving Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA/ESIA) and Management problems.
4. Design and undertake a major piece of independent research in the field of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA/ESIA) and Management, and communicate the purpose, context, methodology, results, and implications of the findings.

3.3 CRITICAL SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL LITERACY

1. Develop understanding of communication processes within the context of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA/ESIA) and Management, recognising and reflecting upon dimensions of interpersonal, organisational and intercultural communications.
2. Critically consider the role of negotiation, mediation and advocacy within Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA/ESIA) and Management processes, and evaluate the importance of collaboration and teamwork in multidisciplinary contexts.
3. Develop personal responsibility and professional effectiveness, working with others and taking both leadership and supportive roles to promote strategic, analytical and creative approaches to problem solving in complex situations.
4. Become a 'reflective practitioner', developing a critical awareness of personal competencies (self-management) and social competencies (managing relationships), and engaging proactively with continuous professional development by identifying and evaluating options for self-improvement.

3.4 DIGITAL AND INFORMATION LITERACY

1. Critically evaluate new approaches and technologies for enhancing the effectiveness of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA/ESIA) and Management processes.
2. Appraise a range of information systems (including Geographical Information Systems, Building Information Modelling, and Sustainability Analytics) in a real or realistic context, assessing their value within decision-making processes.
3. Evaluate and communicate complex environmental and social information to diverse communities (e.g. including experts, decision-makers, and the public) to a professional practice standard.
4. Develop a critical appreciation of digital citizenship, promoting high ethical standards of digital engagement within the context of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA/ESIA) and Management professional practice.

3.5 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

1. Appraise the importance of proactive stakeholder involvement and public engagement within Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA/ESIA) and Management processes, communicating effectively with a diverse range of interests (e.g. local residents, community groups, business people, protest groups, NGOs, commercial developers, politicians, regulators, and statutory consultees).
2. Appreciate and respect diversity of cultures, views and ideologies, recognising the importance of evaluating equal opportunity, social inclusion and non-discrimination in the pursuit of effective Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA/ESIA) and Management practice.
3. Develop a reflective and adaptive approach to problem-solving that is sensitive to environmental, social and cultural context and which harnesses insights from collaborative working.

SECTION 4: CURRICULUM CONTENT & STRUCTURE

4.1 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS:

Code	Module Title	Credits	Level	Status	Coursework: Exam ratio
EIAM700 1	Effective and Proportionate Environmental Impact Assessment	30	7	Compulsory	100% coursework
EIAM700 2	Collaborative Working and Knowledge Co-Creation	30	7	Compulsory	100% coursework
EIAM700 3	Environmental and Social Risk Management: New Frontiers of Decision-Making	30	7	Compulsory	100% coursework
EIAM700 4	The Digital Transformation: Towards Intelligent Impact Assessment	30	7	Compulsory	100% coursework
PMAN70 09	Applied Research Methods	10	7	Compulsory	100% coursework
PMAN70 10	Dissertation	50	7	Compulsory	100% coursework

4.2 PROGRESSION AND AWARD REQUIREMENTS

All the modules on the MSc in Environmental Impact Assessment and Management are at level 7 and are compulsory. Students may enter the programme either at the start of Semester 1 (September) or Semester 2 (January). Full-time students undertake two 30 credit modules per semester, plus Applied Research Methods (10 credits) which runs across Semesters 1 and 2. Upon successful completion of the four core 30 credit modules plus the research methods module, students undertake a dissertation (50 credits) either in the summer (for September entry) or in Semester 2 (for January entry).

Open learning students undertake one 30 credit module per semester plus Applied Research Methods across Semester 1 and 2 in Year 2. As with full-time students, upon successful completion of the four core 30 credit modules plus the Applied Research Methods module, open learning students undertake a dissertation (50 credits), either in the summer period (for September entry) or in Semester 2 (for January entry) of Year 2.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Impact Assessment and Management exit award is available, for which students must successfully complete four 30 credit modules (i.e. *excluding* modules P33523 Applied Research Methods and P33599 Dissertation), giving a total of 120 level 7 credits.

Post Graduate Certificate in Environmental Impact Assessment and Management requires successful completion of two 30 credit modules (i.e. *excluding* modules P33523 Applied Research Methods and P33599 Dissertation), giving a total of 60 level 7 credits.

The Postgraduate Diploma and the Postgraduate Certificates do not carry professional accreditation status.

4.3 PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The MSc programme has accreditation by:

(i) The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)

And is seeking accreditation from:

(ii) The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)

The MSc programme has been mapped against the requirements and competencies for accreditation by the RICS under the 'Environmental Surveyor' pathway. The MSc has also been mapped to the knowledge and skills required by the RTPI for accreditation as a 'specialist course'.

SECTION 5: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

A variety of teaching and learning approaches are used to deliver theoretically informed, practice-relevant content that supports the development of the knowledge and skills required in professional practice. In particular, the programme employs a Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach in which students learn about a subject through the experience of solving an open-ended problem, often based around a real world case study. This method has been shown to develop lifelong learning skills, transferable skills and subject knowledge which can be readily applied in practice.

Overall, the programme is designed to facilitate learning through applying the Oxford Brookes' five core [Postgraduate Attributes](#).

The typical types of learning activities students will be involved in are as follows:

Lectures (mixture of face-to-face sessions for full-time students; recorded webinars and pre-recorded lectures for both full-time and open learners) introduce key concepts, theories and current issues in EIA and Management. Students will be exposed to a range of perspectives from both academic staff and guest lectures by visiting practitioners.

Seminars and online discussion forums provide an environment for stimulating debate, group discussion and the testing of ideas. Seminars and discussion forums are typically linked to the content developed in lectures or acquired through specified prior reading.

Workshops (conducted both face-to-face and via recorded webinars) provide the opportunity to develop and apply knowledge linked to practical work, and also serve to advance professional skills. Throughout the programme students will be supported in working collaboratively with peers both in class and online. This affords students the opportunity to work in diverse teams and experience first-hand different approaches to problem solving. Workshops are a key feature of the Intensive Study Periods, creating opportunities to develop project work in collaboration with peers, along with guidance from tutors.

Presentations (conducted both face-to-face and via webinars) enable students to practice the communication skills that are essential for effective professionals, including the clear explanation of complex ideas and concepts to clients.

Case studies and field visits create first hand opportunities to engage with and thus learn from a variety of EIA and Management problems, projects, and contexts.

Working within the VLE is a key aspect of the programme for both full-time and open-learners. The VLE is used to support all aspects of learning e.g. to deliver filmed lectures, host discussion forums monitored by module leaders, provide teaching and learning material, and to facilitate collaboration amongst student peers. In addition it is used for both formative and summative assessment feedback.

For *full time* students, study time during the semester will typically be divided between attending two x 2 hourly sessions per week for each of the two core modules (including a mixture of lectures, seminars or workshops), and a weekly 2 hour session for research methods in the first semester (reducing to

approximately two class sessions in the second semester as students work on a research proposal, supported by tutorials). Outside the module contact hours, students will undertake independent learning (e.g. reading and research, review of online material, and online individual and group collaborative learning) to work on coursework assignments.

For the *open learner*, study time will be divided between: attending online seminars (approximately monthly); participating in 'Question and Answer' sessions (approximately once a fortnight); engaging in on online discussion forums; collaborating online with peers for assessments and independent study. Face-to-face contact for open learning students takes place within the four Intensive Study Periods where students share much of their learning with full-time peers.

The assessment strategy for the programme has been designed to combine academic rigour and integration of theory and practice, with an emphasis on continuous development, and reflection on student learning. The assessments are designed to develop the breadth, depth and application of student knowledge. Due to the "problem solving" nature of our teaching, there are no examinations on the programme, with coursework used in preference in order to promote a deeper learning approach. In line with the Assessment Compact, a variety of coursework types are used in order to help the student develop and practice a broad range of skills. Examples include: report writing, presentations, essays, reflective work (journal entries and reports), quizzes, and collaborative project work.

The programme team regard assessing and providing feedback on coursework as a continuous process which allows for regular instances of formative feedback. Peer-reviews are also used to promote learning from each other and to further encourage reflective learning. By having a coursework-only approach, the programme recognises that students and teaching staff have a joint responsibility for assessment and need to engage in a dialogue about all assessment practice, including feedback. This is central to the University's Assessment Compact.

Though not compulsory, open-learning students are advised to have at least six months relevant industry experience prior to starting the course. Open-learning students who are in professional practice are encouraged to integrate their learning with their work-place environment and in the virtual classroom to enhance their knowledge and skills as professionals.

SECTION 6: ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME

6.1 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

It is expected that candidates for the MSc Environmental Impact Assessment and Management will come from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, including environmental science, ecology, planning, geography, landscape architecture, construction, surveying, civil engineering, economics, and management (amongst many others). Some may have been working in related fields or may possess professional experience e.g. in preparing or reviewing EIAs. A diversity of interests and skills is welcomed on this interdisciplinary programme. All applicants must however meet two requirements:

1. A first class or upper second class honours degree or equivalent. We will also consider applications from candidates with relevant experience (or an alternative qualification) and demonstrable ability to study at master's level subject to a formal interview; and
2. English as a mother tongue or IELTS 6.5 (paper/computer) or other appropriate evidence of English language skills, both oral and written, that meets the University and Programme requirements (see: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/international/applying-to-arriving/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

6.2 DBS AND OTHER PRE-COURSE CHECKS REQUIRED

Not applicable.

6.3 JOB ROLE/EMPLOYER PROFILE (DEGREE AND HIGHER APPRENTICESHIPS)

Not applicable.

SECTION 7: PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

The programme sees the preparation of students for employment as an integrated process in which the curriculum and the learning environment together contribute to provide students with opportunities to enhance their potential employability.

Opportunities within the curriculum

The programme curriculum has been carefully designed in close consultation with practitioners to respond to the requirements of potential employers, particularly through the use of problem-based learning and coursework assignments that mirror industry requirements (e.g. the production and review of Environmental Statements for major development proposals). Such activities mean that students are well prepared to quickly make a positive contribution within the profession.

The MSc in Environmental Impact Assessment and Management adopts a collaborative approach to teaching which draws upon strong links with employers to contribute to the programme. For example, visiting speakers from consultancy, industry, regulatory bodies, and professional organisations contribute case studies, lectures and workshops to explore the challenges of practice. In recent years, consultancy speakers have included Technical Director / Partner level contributions on international ESIA practice and major development proposals such as HS2. From the regulatory side, speakers have included Examining Inspectors for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), as well as local authority planning officers. These opportunities provide students with insights on practice that will be relevant to the workplace but also enable interaction and networking with potential employers. Furthermore, many of our research and consultancy contracts are completed in partnership with prominent planning and environmental consultancies e.g. staff have recently published a major new edition of "[*Methods of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment*](#)" (Therivel and Wood, 2017), a key textbook that draws together cutting-edge practice from around the globe.

Learning Environment

The School of the Built Environment has a strong relationship with the University's Careers Centre. Together they organise a major built environment Careers Fair each autumn, where students can approach a wide range of planning and environmental consultancies, construction, real estate and other related companies for work experience and specific careers advice. Students are encouraged to use the facilities offered by the Careers Centre, including CV workshops, and practice interviews and assessment-centre activities.

The students undertaking the open learning mode of study at Oxford Brookes are often in employment and many are sponsored by their companies. Full-time and open-learners have a number of opportunities to meet face-to-face if they attend the Intensive Study Periods as well as interacting online in discussion forums and within collaborative group work. Through these interactions, our full-time students are afforded the opportunity to develop global networks of contacts within industry. In addition, current students and alumni can interact through our active LinkedIn Alumni/Student Group.

Our strong linkages with RICS and other organisations such as the Institute of Environmental Assessment and Management, give students the opportunity to attend the many continual professional development events, lectures, seminars and workshops these organisations host. Such events provide excellent opportunities for our students both to gain professional knowledge and to network with potential employers.

Oxford Brookes has a long tradition of teaching in environmental assessment and management, and previous graduates on our postgraduate courses in this field have gone on to develop careers such as:

- Environmental consultancy and environmental planning practice e.g. working for companies such as WSP, Rambol, AECOM, ERM, RPS Group, Savills Ltd, Amec Foster Wheeler, Golder Associates, Nicholas Pearson Associates, Pegasus Group, Waterman Group, amongst many others
- Environmental managers and EIA / Sustainability officers with regulatory agencies and government departments, both in the UK and internationally
- Environmental officers within industry e.g. the mining sector, power generation, automotive sector
- Officers with non-statutory bodies and NGOs