

## Podcast: Our Certificate of Higher Education Built Environment Studies

**Andrew Belt:** Welcome to our latest programme-focused podcast, where we shine the spotlight on our Certificate of Higher Education Built Environment Studies programme. I'm delighted to be joined by Programme Leader, Hazel Lobo. Hi Hazel.

**Hazel Lobo:** Hello, Andrew.

**AB:** How are you?

**HL:** I'm very well, thank you. Spring is arriving fast, which always makes me feel good. How are you doing?

**AB:** Well, thank you, and similarly urging spring to blossom as soon as possible for many reasons. I think we're looking forward to spring more perhaps than any other year we've experienced. Hotter weather and hopefully more chances to go outside!

**HL:** As well as a bit of colour after the rain we've had this winter.

**AB:** Yes, it has felt grey and cold so I think we're in desperate need of a bit of sun.

**HL:** Absolutely.

**AB:** So, moving on to your programme. um, As a starter for 10, for those who don't know about your programme, what is the Certificate of Higher Education Built Environment Studies?

**HL:** It's a qualification in its own. First of all, it gives you the first year of an undergraduate degree and it's a really good experience for what undergraduate study is like but it also gives you that qualification at the end. So, it's not just a single module study that gives you some knowledge but nothing tangible to hold onto or show to an employer.

**AB:** Great stuff. And who do you think would benefit from studying on your programme?

**HL:** Oh, Andrew, that's such a huge question because there are so many different groups of students who benefit – the most obvious is as I suggested are the students who want to try out undergraduate study who can't commit to a full undergraduate programme or perhaps they're not sure whether this area is right for them.

Maybe they know they want to go into the surveying profession, for example, but they're not sure whether they want to be a building surveyor or a quantity surveyor, or whether they want to do something slightly different – construction management, facilities management or related fields. In order to do the full degree, you need to know which one you want to do. Therefore, the CertHE gives you the opportunity to try a bit of each of the elements because you're taking the core modules for the full undergraduate programme and then you can use that knowledge to help you determine which path you're going down. But, as I say, you get to a qualification in its own right at the end.

**AB:** Great stuff. You mentioned the core modules so perhaps you could provide a bit more detail on them. What will the students study on them?

**HL:** They'll study six modules. They'll start with either 'Law for the Built Environment' and 'People and Organisational Management', or if they're joining us in spring, they'll do 'Digital Technologies' and then 'Construction Technology'. And those modules then swap in the second semester. It's a three-semester programme, 18 months if you're doing it part time. In

the third semester, they'll study 'Introduction to Regulatory Frameworks' and 'Construction Technology 2'.

Those names probably don't mean very much to anybody listening so let me give you a little bit more information about what they are. 'Law for the Built Environment' is an introduction to law as it impacts on the built environment, but it's not the whole of law. It's looking particularly at the law of contract and tort law which concerns the civil implications of written law.

In this module, we look at nuisance and negligence, occupiers' liability and trespass. What students will get out of learning on the law module is not just the underpinning of law that they will then take into other modules that they study, but also problem-solving skills because law is very much about that.

It's really important to stress though that the module is not about teaching students to be lawyers. It's not about learning lots of case names and dates. That's not how it works.

'People and Organisation Management' is a foundation module which looks at: what is management and how does that differ from leadership?

It's looking at the role of management within organisations and is specifically focused on the role of management in construction and other areas of the built environment. It also looks at change management. These are all things that students will be able to bring into their professional lives, as well as their further studies.

'Digital Technologies' is a relatively new module which looks at technology and data. In the built environment, we hear a lot about big data these days, and this module will give you an insight into what that means. How can we use technology to help in our job roles? For example, drones are very common now in some areas of the built environment, particularly in real estate agency and in construction, when you're looking at a site in development, so that module will help introduce students to some of those aspects.

I also mentioned 'Introduction to Regulatory Frameworks' and that again is law-related, but not quite in the same way as 'Law for the Built Environment'. It's looking at the written laws and regulations affecting the built environment, particularly things like building regulations. There's an introduction to planning regulations - there's some health and safety regulations in that - hazardous materials, a little bit of waste management and in particular, the role of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies in managing legal implications for the built environment.

And then the final two of the six are 'Construction Technology 1' and 'Construction Technology 2'.

'Construction Technology 1' looks at what we call simple construction. It's about traditional. Construction, masonry, looking at buildings of up to three storeys, again, laying a foundation for taking into 'Construction Technology 2' where you look at more framed structures, timber-framed structures, design of structures, and material use within structures. We do a lot more in that module around environmental services, environmental sustainability and looking at how the built environment impacts on sustainable development, for example.

So, quite a lot of information there to take in, I know, but hopefully listeners to the podcast will be able to pause and reflect on what we're doing. It's a broad foundation - an introduction to the built environment.

**AB:** That's a great overview, Hazel. I'm sure that there might be particular triggers of interest there, whether it's drones in construction you hear and think: 'that would be fantastic to get a good understanding of' or whether it's the law side of the built environment.

Obviously students who decide to study with us study online and as programme leader, you're the main contact for the programme, but it's not just you as we have a large academic and online education team. So, who else is available to support anyone studying on the programme?

**HL:** That's a great question. Thank you, Andrew. I do want to point out, before I talk about the teaching team, that one of the benefits of UCEM is the wider support for our students because we are an online institution. We've got a tremendous support network here for our students. So students aren't just helped by the teaching team. I'll talk about those in a moment, but there's also a disability and wellbeing team and a student support network which operates on a range of different things and they lead into the teaching team.

The teaching team itself includes industry professionals, we have some really great tutors who teach on some of these modules. Again, as it's an introduction, we want students to be feeling the passion from the two tutors to help them and understand the material. Every module has an academic support tutor, somebody who's well-qualified in helping students to study.

Studying on the CertHE are typically new students, people returning to learn after a break or people making their first foray into higher education from secondary education. We have a team of tutors who will help you with your study skills. They will help you with your essay-writing so it's not just the teaching team in terms of knowledge experts, it's a wider support network to help you in all aspects of your student life.

**AB:** Fantastic. So we've run through who the programme is for, what it's about and you've given a great overview of the many modules and also the support network which is available to our students who are going on to the programme.

As our final question and your elevator pitch moment, I suppose: why do you think people should study on your programme?

**HL:** These are challenging times. They remain challenging times. It's really hard for any of us to know where we're going to be in six months, a year or 18 months, and many of us have had our plans change over the last year and a half so this programme offers students the ability to have something that's stable for a finite period.

They're not committing to, say, a full undergraduate programme for four or four-and-a-half years without knowing what the world is going to look like by the time they get to the end. This is just 18 months with a qualification at the end; something that gives you something to work for, something to focus on in what can be challenging times. As I said, students taking the CertHE have that opportunity to gain a qualification that they can then use either on its own or to move into another study on to a full bachelor's programme, for example. Of course, I would say it's an excellent programme, but I honestly believe that it is. If, for any reason, you want to study at higher education but you're not sure where you want to go with it or whether you can commit to a full four year programme, then this for you.

**AB:** Fantastic. Great elevator pitch and a nice way to draw to the podcast to a close. Thank you, Hazel, for your time. So, there you have it. If you are interested in studying on Hazel's programme, head to our website - [ucem.ac.uk](http://ucem.ac.uk), select 'Study with UCEM' on the left-hand side menu then 'Undergraduate' to find out more and to apply. Thanks for listening.