

Research Skills and Current Affairs

Module Descriptor

Module Code: PLN7RSC

Version: 2.00

Status: Final

Date: 26/02/2025

Summary Module Details

Module details

Module Title: Research Skills and Current Affairs

Module Leader:

Module Mode: Supported online learning

Semester: Autumn / Spring (UK)

Level: 7

Credits: 10

Learning Hours: 100

Contact & Study Hours

Directed Study Time: 30 hrs (30%)

Self-directed Study Time: 35 hrs (35%)

Assessment Study Time: 35 hrs (35%)

Assessment Type

Coursework: 100%

Computer Marked Assessment: 0%

Self-directed Research Project: 0%

Portfolio: 0%

Module Summary

This module will enable students to develop the research skills required to navigate the ever-changing flow of socio-political planning discourse from academia, practice and the public, whilst informing their own approach to research. Operational practices around how others undertake research and its dissemination, alternative approaches, drivers and motivations, along with sources used for supportive evidence, data types and methods of data collection and analysis will be discussed.

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 levels 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.

It is considered advisory to complete this module prior to undertaking the Independent Research Project (PRJ7IRP).

Taken on which Programmes

MSc Urban Planning (C)

Core (C) or Elective (E)

Module Aims

This module aims to offer students the opportunity to:

- Navigate evidence found in various current types of publication by developing their skills of critique around the relevant body of academic and grey (current affairs) literatures associated with socio-political planning matters.
- Be equipped with the necessary understanding, knowledge and skills to undertake aspects of research.

Module Learning Outcomes

- LO1. To express an understanding of what constitutes knowledge, how it is created and the methods available and disseminated.
- LO2. To critique current affairs associated with socio-political planning matters through a rigorous understanding of a range of publication media, data collection methods and analysis techniques.
- LO3. To appreciate the necessary research skills for interrogating research data, case studies, and future research projects (e.g. Independent Research Project, Dissertation or Work-Based Research Project).

Indicative Module Content

Module topics

- Knowledge fundamentals – ontology, epistemology and methodology.
- Authors' and publication motives.
- Primary and secondary data reliability.
- Data analysis, findings, and contribution to knowledge.
- Critique of research and current affairs using the above as touchpoints.
- Current and ever-changing flow of socio-political planning matters.

This content will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the evolving body of knowledge regarding social media and social science research.

Overview of Summative Assessment

Module learning outcomes	Assessment	Word count or equivalent	Weighting
LO1, LO2, LO3	Assessment 1 Coursework (e.g. critique of publications)	2,750	100%

Module Pass Mark (each element is to be passed separately): 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 UCEM 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. Each week will have a key theme related to the module, drawing upon an evolving set of methods, including flipped learning with interactive workshops, discussions, online Padlet discussion activities for students unable to attend the live sessions.

Online tutorials/seminars led by specific academics 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 with a degree of flexibility. Module forums on the VLE provide further opportunities 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 website and is updated regularly to ensure materials are relevant and current.