

BECOMING A RECOGNISED PRACTITIONER IN URBAN DESIGN

Recognised Practitioner in Urban
Design
Guidance and Application Form

September 2025

Return completed form to:
Urban Design Group
70 Cowcross Street
London EC1 6EJ
administration@udg.org.uk

RECOGNISED PRACTITIONER IN URBAN DESIGN

Professionals with a suitable balance of education and experience can apply to become a Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design. The distinction provides a wide range of professionals with a valued affiliation (in many cases an additional one), proclaiming their commitment to – and experience of – urban design. Being a Recognised Practitioner can give those working in urban design a stronger sense of identity; greater influence on professional practice and public policy; and a feeling of common purpose.

Recognised Practitioners are professionals with a wide range of skills and experience of designing in an urban context. Many of the new generation of professionals have more than one professional affiliation; moreover, they expect – and are required – to develop new skills and areas of expertise throughout their career.

Recognised Practitioners come from a diverse range of professional backgrounds including:

- Urban Design
- Highway and Civil Engineering
- Building Conservation
- Development Control
- Landscape Architecture
- Lighting
- Architecture
- Regeneration and Development
- Transport Planning
- and other professions

The core of the Recognised Practitioner assessment is the *Capacitycheck* system, which enables people from a wide range of different backgrounds and roles to be considered, including practitioners involved in policy formulation, research or academia.

IMPORTANT:

The award of Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design is made by a review panel formed of members of the Urban Design Group Trustees and the Urban Design Group Executive Committee of the Urban Design Group, on the basis of information submitted in the application form and declarations made by the candidate, in addition to the recommendation of two independent sponsors.

At the time the award is made, each candidate is able to demonstrate, by their declared experience and qualifications, that they had striven to contribute to the practice of urban design and should, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, be capable of making a valued contribution to urban design in future years.

CAPACITYCHECK: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Foundations of Urban Design

- | | |
|---|---|
| A1 The objectives of urban design and the qualities of successful places | A5 The other systems and agencies that shape the built environment |
| A2 Collaborative and participative processes | A6 How to use, read and interpret urban design documents and plans |
| A3 How design relates to different spatial scales | A7 Implementing urban design |
| A4 The role of urban design in local government | A8 Caring for the place |

Urban Design Topics

- | | |
|---|---|
| Form and context | People |
| B1 Natural setting | B11 Emotional needs |
| B2 Legislative and policy context | B12 Sensory experience |
| B3 Historical, cultural, social and economic context | B13 Factors contributing to health |
| B4 Land ownership | B14 Safety and security |
| B5 Urban form | |
| B5 Types of building | Servicing |
| B7 Materials | B15 Water |
| B8 Greenspace and landscape | B16 Energy |
| B9 Movement and inclusive access | B17 Telecommunications |
| | B18 Waste |
| | B19 Utilities |
| | Management |
| | B20 Management & maintenance |

The skills needed include an understanding of the planning system, urbanism, sustainability, sustainable communities, development economics, context appraisal, movement analysis, infrastructure, regeneration strategy, conservation, landscape design, site planning, masterplanning, public and stakeholder collaboration, implementation, project funding, project management, graphic communication, negotiation, and how to formulate design policy and write guidance. A practitioner in urban design must be able to communicate orally, graphically and in writing, as well as a commitment to working across professional boundaries. A professional without such qualities is unlikely to be able to get to grips with the full complexities of the urban design and development process.

HOW TO APPLY

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO BE A RECOGNISED PRACTITIONER?

The distinction of Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design is open to anyone who meets three criteria:

1. Commitment
2. Experience and Qualifications
3. Two Sponsors

1. COMMITMENT

You will need to demonstrate a commitment to the principles of the UDG:

The principles of the Urban Design Group

- Context – Relating urban change to the best of what already exists.
- Diversity – Encouraging the variety that enlarges the interest or choices a place can offer.
- Equity – Making places (and their facilities and amenities) accessible to people beyond the owner and immediate users.
- Stewardship – Taking a broad and long-term view of the costs and benefits of any change and understanding what makes towns and cities sustainable.
- Empowerment – Building the sense of identity of the people who live and work in a place, their involvement in caring for its fabric and character, and their capacity to influence the forces that shape the environment.

2. EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

You will need to demonstrate a mix of relevant experience and qualifications.

Qualifications	Experience required
	<i>You must demonstrate that you have devoted the majority of your working time during this period to four or more of the seven activities listed in 'Roles in Urban Design' (see next page) or other activities that the UDG may be willing to accept as part of the work of an urban designer</i>
Diploma or Master's Degree in Urban Design	at least 3 years' experience *
Post Graduate Certificate (60 credits) or Undergraduate Degree in Urban Design	at least 4 years' experience *
A related built environment qualification e.g., Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Town Planning, Urban Planning, Urban Regeneration, Urban Engineering.	at least 5 years, depending on the relevance of the course. Please ensure that you have provided sufficient detail of course content for this to be assessed in the relevant section of the application form.
No relevant formal built environment qualification	at least 10 years

* Experience gained prior to your MA or Diploma in Urban Design can be included but the applicant must clearly demonstrate that is genuinely professional urban design experience.

Please ensure that you clearly meet – and preferably exceed – the stated minimum experience requirements. Applications that only marginally satisfy the criteria are unlikely to be successful, as we expect our Recognised Practitioners to demonstrate substantial real-world experience.

3. TWO SPONSORS

The sponsors vouch for the quality of your work and the veracity of your application. You will need two sponsors:

- **SPONSOR 1: PRACTITIONER OF STANDING**

The first sponsor should be either a **UDG Recognised Practitioner**, a **practitioner of similar standing** within the profession, or a **member of the UDG Executive Committee**.

- **SPONSOR 2: CURRENT OR RECENT EMPLOYER OF STANDING**

The second sponsor should be either a **current or recent employer** (or a senior colleague in the case of practitioners who are also employers), or an **academic sponsor**.

Note: Sponsor 2 should not be employed by the same organisation as sponsor 1.

CAPACITYCHECK: ROLES IN URBAN DESIGN

The Recognised Practitioner designation is a mark of experience and achievement, not just knowledge and skills. Assessment is based upon the applicant's experience in carrying out roles in urban design.

The list below (taken from *Capacitycheck*) sets out roles that are carried out by urban designers (who may or may not call themselves by that title). No urban designer will have all of these as specialist skills. The bullet points are examples of the kind of activities which may be carried out in each role:

Role		Some Examples
C1	Carrying out urban design studies and appraisals	Carrying out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban morphology studies • Policy reviews • Site and context appraisals • Urban character assessments • Conservation area and building appraisals. • Transport impact assessments • Public space appraisals • Feasibility appraisal • Placechecks
C2	Preparing urban design policy, guidance and statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing urban design policies for a local development framework • Monitoring and reviewing design policy and guidance • Preparing vision statements • Preparing urban design codes • Preparing and illustrating urban design guidance • Preparing design guides • Preparing design and access statements • Preparing development briefs • Preparing urban design frameworks • Drawing up planning and design principles for specific areas or sites • Preparing design statements • Preparing public realm strategies • Facilitating local or village design statements
C3	Masterplanning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a strategic urban design plan for a town and its surrounds. • Creating a masterplan including blue and green infrastructure • Designing the movement network for an area or site • Designing development layouts or producing indicative layouts for specific sites • Designing public realm or street improvement schemes • Preparing masterplans • Preparing site drawings • Preparing presentations
C4	Designing	
C5	Communicating design in two dimensions (by hand or computer)	
C6	Communicating design in three dimensions (by hand or computer)	
C7	Providing urban design advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising prospective planning applicants on design aspects of development • Advising elected politicians and local government officers on design aspects of development • Supporting and advising a design champion • Giving design advice on planning applications as part of the development control function of a local authority • Advising other local government services on urban design matters

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on the form and content of design statements as part of the submission requirements to accompany planning applications • Preparing statements of evidence and giving evidence on urban design matters on appeals into planning applications and development plan inquiries • Advising the public on urban design matters • Collaborating with a range of professionals across local authority service areas • Participating in community consultations.
C8	Managing urban design processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiating with planning applicants and their agents • Managing the process of public and stakeholder involvement • Setting briefs for and managing design consultants • Negotiating with public service professionals in submitting design statements • Managing public and stakeholder involvement in preparing public realm strategies, development briefs and urban design frameworks • Planning and organising urban design competitions • Setting briefs for and managing design consultants • Enabling and managing the development process • Formulating and setting urban design performance indicators • Collaborating with public service professionals on the management, design and maintenance of the public realm.
C9	Promoting placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up and administering a local design awards scheme • Setting up and administering a local design panel. • Acting as an advocate for placemaking

ASSESSMENT

The assessment procedure is as follows:

- Confirmation of receipt of your application by UDG office. Any obvious problems with the application will be flagged up at this stage (inappropriate sponsors, insufficient experience etc)
- Detailed assessment of information submitted within the application by the UDG's Recognised Practitioner Assessment Panel, made up of a small group of members from the UDG Board of Trustees Executive Committee.
- The panel will make one of three recommendations:
 - the applicant should be elected as a Recognised Practitioner,
 - request further information if there is any uncertainty or ambiguity, or
 - reject the application (providing a clear reason for this decision based on the assessment criteria).
- In cases where the Panel cannot come to a decision (for example, if additional information is needed), you may be invited for a brief interview to further elaborate upon their skills and experience, but this will normally not be necessary.
- You will be informed of the outcome of your application by email. The panel's decision is final.
- Your status as a Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design will commence as soon as your first subscription fee has been paid.
- The full process should take 2-3 months from receipt of the application to a final decision (unless there are any difficult issues to address). If you have not heard from us within two months of us confirming receipt of your application, please feel free to contact administration@udg.org.uk.

DESIGNATORY LETTERS

At present, the UDG does not award designatory letters to be used after your name. However, it is permissible to employ the words 'Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design', or similar, on your CV. Recognised Practitioners can use the RP logo on their business cards, stationery and email signature and are also listed in the [UDG Directory](#).

MEMBERSHIP AND FEE

Recognition will be renewable on an annual basis for a fee (subject to yearly review), including membership of the UDG at no extra cost. Individuals who are already paid-up UDG members can upgrade to Recognised Practitioner status pro-rata.

- **Unpaid subscriptions**
The status of a Recognised Practitioner will lapse, in accordance with the UDG constitution, if a due subscription is unpaid after six months.
- **Reinstatement**
In order to reinstate a lapsed Recognised Practitioner membership after this point, an additional sum equivalent to one year's subscription (£110) will be payable together with the annual subscription fee (£110) and a written statement of recent professional activity, including continuing professional development (CPD). The total amount payable to reinstate the membership will therefore be £220.
- **Hardship (unemployment or illness)**
In cases when a Recognised Practitioner is out of work for a significant period, they may apply for a reduced subscription given at the discretion of the UDG.

RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

- **Continuing professional development**

Renewal will normally be automatic providing practitioners undertake to complete at least five days of appropriate CPD each year (for example, either whole or half days at conferences or the equivalent hours for attending seminars, talks etc.) and to maintain brief records. We would expect Recognised Practitioners to keep themselves informed and updated with current developments in urban design by attending seminars, conferences and presentations on a regular basis as well as reading relevant literature. The UDG has confidence that professionals will be able to judge for themselves what is and is not appropriate to their needs. Whilst Recognised Practitioners are not routinely asked to submit an account of their CPD activities, the UDG reserves the right to request such evidence should it become necessary.

The UDG seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the skills and experience of our Recognised Practitioners. Practitioners are therefore encouraged to update their recognition annually with reference to the Urban Design Alliance's Capacitycheck and relevant urban design skills prior to renewal.

- **Commitment**

Recognised practitioners should see themselves as leading players in urban design. They should be active members of the urban design community striving to raise awareness, promoting best practice through the example they set in their own work, and by their encouragement of others, including colleagues, members of the public and politicians.

When renewing their membership annually, Recognised Practitioners are invited to share brief details of their efforts to demonstrate leadership in the profession including examples of recent projects, initiatives, and activities. This will be of great help in inspiring future events and initiatives and obtaining ideas for forthcoming editions of *Urban Design* and other publications.

ADVICE TO EMPLOYERS

As the Recognised Practitioner assessment is based on a broad range of skills, prospective employers should make their own enquiries to ascertain that the candidate has the specific skills and experience required for a particular role.

Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design APPLICATION FORM



General information

Title:		Name:	
Address (for correspondence & delivery of <i>Urban Design</i>):		Billing address (if different):	
Postcode:		Postcode:	
Country		Country	
Email:			
Telephone:		Mobile:	

Employer's name:
Address:
Postcode:

Are you already a member of the Urban Design Group? Yes No

Basis of my application

Qualifications and Experience – please tick one

- No relevant formal built environment qualification but over 10 years' experience in urban design
- A related built environment qualification, and more than 5 years' experience in urban design
- Post Graduate Certificate (60 credits) or Undergraduate Degree in Urban Design and more than 4 years' experience
- Diploma or Master's Degree in Urban Design, and more than 3 years' experience in urban design

Sponsor 1– A Practitioner of Standing – please tick one

- A UDG Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design, or
- A practitioner of similar standing within the profession, or
- A member of the UDG Executive Committee. (See the UDG website for the current list of Executive members or phone the UDG Office 020 7250 0892 for advice). Or email: director@udg.org.uk

Sponsor 2 – A Current or Recent Employer of Standing – please tick one

- A current or recent employer or line manager – Recent means within the past four years, or
- An academic sponsor (eg current or recent course leader or supervisor), or

If you are self-employed

- A senior colleague

Membership of organisations related to urban design, including professional memberships

Name of organisation	Type of Membership	Date of Election or Joining

QUALIFICATIONS

Please list all relevant qualifications from degree level onwards. Please note, to become a Recognised Practitioner, it is generally expected that you will be educated to degree level or equivalent.

Title of Course	Awarding institution	Qualification gained and details of course content	Date of award

If you have a qualification other than a Diploma or Masters' Degree in Urban Design, please provide below details of the subjects covered, the duration of the course, and any design or project work. We will need sufficient information to demonstrate that the content you studied was comparable to the MA/MSc/Diploma in Urban Design.

Course module	Subjects covered	Number of hours tuition	Number of days on project work
<i>Urban Morphology (example)</i>	<i>History of urban morphology: Patterns of morphology, planned and organic, burgage plot systems through to DB32 loop and cul-de-sac estates, and the perimeter block.</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>120</i>

(Please expand this listing as necessary).			

EXPERIENCE

Please provide full details of relevant work and urban design experience, demonstrating clearly how this supports your application for Recognised Practitioner status with reference to the categories listed in the chart below (based on part C of Capacitycheck – ‘Roles in Urban Design’). You must specifically address each of the categories which apply in the ‘description of your work’ section, giving case study examples. For each job, you should also include a breakdown of the proportion of time spent doing specific tasks (see example given). Please note that all examples given should come from your work experience not your college project work.

Category Description

1	C1 Carrying out urban design studies and appraisals
2	C2 Preparing urban design policy, guidance and statements
3	C3 Masterplanning + C5 Communicating design in two dimensions (by hand or computer) and C6 Communicating design in three dimensions (by hand or computer)
4	C4 Designing + C5 Communicating design in two dimensions (by hand or computer) and C6 Communicating design in three dimensions (by hand or computer)
5	C7 Providing urban design advice
6	C8 Managing urban design processes
7	C9 Promoting placemaking
8	Or other activities that the UDG may be willing to accept as part of the work of a practitioner in urban design (please give details in the box on the next page headed “other activities”)

N.B. Balancing your qualifications & experience

- If you have a **Diploma or Masters’ Degree in Urban Design**, the experience requirement will be **at least 3 years**. You must demonstrate that you have devoted the majority of your working time during this period to four or more of the seven activities listed in ‘The work of an urban designer’ (see table above and Guidance Notes) or other activities that the UDG may be willing to accept as part of the work of an urban designer.
- If you have a **Post Graduate Certificate (60 credits) or an Undergraduate Degree in Urban Design**, the experience requirement will be **at least 4 years**.
- If you do not have any of the above courses but have **another related built environment qualification** (e.g. Architecture; Landscape Architecture; Town Planning; Urban Planning; Urban Regeneration; Urban Engineering etc.) the requirement for experience will be **at least 5 years** depending on the relevance of the course. Please ensure that you have provided sufficient detail of course content in the box on the preceding page for this to be assessed.
- If you have **no relevant formal built environment qualifications**, you will need to demonstrate that you have devoted the majority of your working time for **at least 10 years** to four or more of the seven activities listed above.
- In all cases, it is expected that the applicant will well exceed the minimum requirements.

Employer’s name & job title: <i>ABC Consultants</i> <i>Highway and urban designer</i>	Percentage of time spent on specific activities		
	Approx percentage	30 %	C1 Carrying out urban design studies and appraisals
		10 %	C2 Preparing urban design policy, guidance and statements
		0 %	C3 Masterplanning

<p><u>Employer's name & job title:</u></p> <p><u>Dates employed:</u></p> <p><u>Time served (years/months)</u></p> <p><u>Description of work</u> <i>(Please provide a clear picture of the tasks you did and how they contributed to the projects on which you were working)</i></p>	<p align="center">Percentage of time spent on specific activities</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td rowspan="10" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Approx percentage of work time spent on activity</td> <td style="text-align: center;">%</td> <td>C1 Carrying out urban design studies and appraisals</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">%</td> <td>C2 Preparing urban design policy, guidance and statements</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">%</td> <td>C3 Masterplanning</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">%</td> <td>C4 Designing + C5 Communicating design in two dimensions (by hand or computer) and C6 Communicating design in three dimensions (by hand or computer)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">%</td> <td>C7 Providing urban design advice + C5 Communicating design in two dimensions (by hand or computer) and C6 Communicating design in three dimensions (by hand or computer)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">%</td> <td>C8 Managing urban design processes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">%</td> <td>C9 Promoting placemaking</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">%</td> <td>Other activities that the UDG may be willing to accept as part of the work of an urban designer</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">%</td> <td>Other non-relevant activities.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">%</td> <td>Total</td> </tr> </table>	Approx percentage of work time spent on activity	%	C1 Carrying out urban design studies and appraisals	%	C2 Preparing urban design policy, guidance and statements	%	C3 Masterplanning	%	C4 Designing + C5 Communicating design in two dimensions (by hand or computer) and C6 Communicating design in three dimensions (by hand or computer)	%	C7 Providing urban design advice + C5 Communicating design in two dimensions (by hand or computer) and C6 Communicating design in three dimensions (by hand or computer)	%	C8 Managing urban design processes	%	C9 Promoting placemaking	%	Other activities that the UDG may be willing to accept as part of the work of an urban designer	%	Other non-relevant activities.	%	Total
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OTHER ACTIVITIES

(Please give details of other experience which you feel is relevant to your application)

Professional Development in the last two years *(Please provide a short list of the activities you have undertaken)*

Statement

Please use the box below to explain briefly how your experience and skills demonstrate your suitability for the distinction of UDG Recognised Practitioner. You should illustrate your commitment to promoting higher standards of urban design and the principles of the UDG (400 words max.)

DECLARATION

I hereby apply for membership of the Urban Design Group as a Recognised Practitioner.

I am committed to the principles of the Urban Design Group, and to advancing the practice of urban design. I undertake to fulfil my professional development commitments and will promote the objectives of the Urban Design Group to the best of my ability.

The information I have given in this application form is complete and correct.

I undertake to pay the annual membership fee if my application is successful.

Signed:

Date.

**if you are already a member of the UDG, any membership payments you have already made will be credited towards the Recognised Practitioner membership fee and you will only need to pay the balance in the first year.*

Please email your completed application to: administration@udg.org.uk

SPONSORS' DECLARATION



Name of individual to be sponsored: _____

SPONSOR 1: PRACTITIONER OF STANDING

The first sponsor should be one of the following – Please tick the appropriate box

- A UDG Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design
- A practitioner of similar standing within the profession
- A member of the UDG Executive Committee.

Sponsor 1 should not be from the same organisation as Sponsor 2.

Full Name:	
Address:	Telephone:
Postcode:	Email:
Job Title and Employer:	
Professional memberships:	
In what capacity do you know the applicant?	
Sponsor's statement	

Are you a member of the Urban Design Group? Yes No

"I believe that all information given by the applicant is, to the best of my knowledge, complete and correct and that the applicant is worthy of appointment to the grade of Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design"

Signed: _____ Date: _____

SPONSORS' DECLARATION

Name of individual to be sponsored: _____

SPONSOR 2: CURRENT OR RECENT EMPLOYER OF STANDING

The second sponsor should be one of the following – Please tick the appropriate box

- A current or recent employer or line manager – Recent means within the past four years
- An academic sponsor (eg current or recent course leader or supervisor)

If the applicant has been or is self-employed

- A senior colleague

Sponsor 2 should not be employed by the same organisation as Sponsor 1.

Full Name:	
Address:	Telephone:
Postcode:	Email:
Job Title and Employer:	
Professional memberships:	
In what capacity do you know the applicant?	
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Are you a member of the Urban Design Group? Yes No

"I believe that all information given by the applicant is, to the best of my knowledge, complete and correct and that the applicant is worthy of appointment to the grade of Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design"

Signed: _____ Date: _____

The Urban Design Group Director is the Data Controller for the personal data on this form for the purposes of the **Data Protection Act 1998**. You have a right to a copy of the data held on you and to ask for any inaccuracies to be corrected.

The UDG holds and uses the information you provide for normal administrative purposes.

Urban Design Group
70 Cowcross Street
London
EC1M 6EJ

administration@udg.org.uk
www.udg.org.uk

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