

Item A. Revised CTP: Moodle Introduction Front Pages

1. The aims of the International Construction Management (ICM) programme are to:
 - i. engage you in a challenging programme of **academic study**
 - ii. provide **study content and process** that you can **integrate with your practice** as a professional manager in the construction industry
 - iii. **contextualise** academic study to **improve the quality** of your professional practice.

2. The aims of the Consolidating Theory and Practice (CTP) unit are for you to:
 - i. engage your learning within the **culture of enquiry** offered by M-level study at a UK institution of higher education
 - ii. monitor and **critically review** how your engagement with the programme progresses as you set **targets** and then seek to realise them
 - iii. explore how your understanding and the quality of your professional practice progresses through your studies
 - iv. make a **valid** claim that you understand your own **educational development**
 - v. as a member of a **collaborative community**, establish an **autobiography** of your own learning that will help you to tap into your own commitment and motivation.

3. The relationship of CTP to the six core ICM units
 - i. CTP consists of a series of **activities** that run parallel to your study of the six core units.
 - ii. There are usually four online CTP activities for each of the core units
 - iii. The CTP unit consists of three sections corresponding to the three stages of the ICM programme (i.e. Modules 1+2; Modules 3+4; Modules 5+6).

4. What are the main elements of CTP?
 - i. At the start of each of the six core units, you complete a **template** that outlines the current state of your understanding and practice within that subject area; you summarise the expectations you have for their development through studying the unit concerned. The completed template is essentially an **educational needs analysis** that describes your personal targets at the start of the unit.
 - ii. The CTP activities in each unit require you to critically review topics through **online dialogue (blogging)** with fellow students and your tutor.
 - iii. On completing each of the three stages of study (i.e. on completion of Modules 2, 4 and 6, you write and submit two **Reflective Commentaries**. Each of the six Reflective Commentaries **describes and explains** how chosen elements (mainly based on your original stated needs) have been improved by (a) your study of the academic materials in the two units and (b) **insights** provided by your online dialogues.

5. How are the six Reflective Commentaries assessed?
 - i. See the Reflective Commentary **criteria**.

6. Summary Chart: main elements and assessment periods [to be timetabled later].

Item B. Revised CTP: Moodle Introduction Linked Pages

academic study

You have chosen to enroll with the ICM programme of study as a major contribution to your ongoing continuing professional development. Academic study at master's level is an educational process that is distinctly different to work-based training: it requires you to employ the higher-order skills of analysis and evaluation, as well as the lower-order skills of remembering new information and rules.

Academic study within ICM requires you to take an active part in the educational process rather than simply being a passive recipient of new knowledge. You are expected to use and develop your sense of critical judgment when working with the programme materials. You are also expected to work with others – your tutors and fellow students around the world – to generate new knowledge and understanding.

Academic study within the ICM programme requires an integration of all that the university environment has to offer with your practice as a professional in the field of construction management.

study content and process

Study within the ICM programme consists of two main elements: the study content and the study process. *Content* consists of all the new knowledge about facts, information, data, rules, laws, procedures etc. that you will take in during the course of your studies. *Process* consists of the way in which you absorb this knowledge and the way in which you are able to use it.

Students who attempt to uncritically memorise the programme content have difficulty in applying it to create solutions to professional problems. Their knowledge exists as endless lists of largely unrelated facts. Students who engage with the programme content in the critical manner required are able to integrate the academic content of the programme with their professional practice. Their knowledge exists as a tightly wound collection of practical and theoretical strands that have a multitude of links between them. ICM graduates have new knowledge and understanding (from the programme content) *and* they know how to use it (by adopting the programme process skills).

integrate with your practice

The ICM MSc programme of study is designed so that you combine academic study with a study of your practice as a construction management professional. The aim is for your ability as a construction manager to steadily improve as you engage with your ICM studies.

Some university programmes keep academic study and professional practice separate. Students are expected to apply their new academic knowledge to their practice after graduation. This approach does not lead easily to an improvement in professional work-based practice.

The ICM programme integrates academic study – both its content and process – with your professional practice. During online activities and in unit assignments, you are expected to show how aspects of your academic study can be used to illuminate and improve your practical work-based performance. This unit (CTP – Consolidating Theory and Practice) helps you to achieve that integration.

contextualise

Look at the titles of the six core ICM units:

Management in Construction

Economics in Construction

Construction Law

Managing Human Resources

Procuring Construction

Strategy in Construction

These titles describe highly practical fields, all of which you will be familiar with; it is also possible that you may have specialised knowledge of some of them. When you study each of these units, you will situate your learning inside the context of your own existing experience.

Through academic study and online activities with your tutors and fellow students, you will extend your understanding in each of these fields. Each ICM student will view the application of new knowledge and understanding in the light of their own individual professional experience. They will also share their interpretations of how they apply their new knowledge by discussing their individual views of the practical contexts within which they each work.

In this way, you will contextualise new thinking from the perspective of your own professional circumstances and also from the perspective of other students who work in diverse environments around the world.

improve the quality

Why have you decided to study construction management at master's level? Most probably you want to make progress in your field of work within the construction industry. You may specifically hope for promotion or for improved pay – but whatever your actual objectives, your overall aim is to improve what you do and become better at your job. In this way, you improve the quality of your professional practice, obtain greater satisfaction from it and grow as a person.

All improvements to all aspects of human activity come about through the process of education. This process can be due to the informal experiences of everyday life or through the particular application of specially designed educational programmes of study. ICM aims to improve the quality of your professional practice by integrating academic study with your practical experience of the construction industry.

culture of enquiry

The University of Bath is a UK institute of higher education. You have no doubt progressed through several stages of formal education when you were a child, an adolescent and a young adult. It is likely you have also engaged with various forms of continuing professional development (CPD) during your time at work. Each of these educational forums has its own culture. Up to the age of around 18, you spent much of your time learning many new facts and rules, such as those that underpin language, mathematics and science. School culture rarely allowed you to question these facts and rules.

The culture in higher education is rather different, especially within the context of ICM at the University of Bath. Here, you are required to actively engage in the educational process rather than simply being a passive recipient. All your efforts are concerned with enquiring into the question "How can I improve the quality of my practice?" This question encourages all students to become critically engaged with the culture of enquiry that lies at the core of the university's effort to create new knowledge and understanding.

critically review

The ICM programme requires you to be responsible for your own learning. You must take an active role in what you learn rather than passively memorising lists of required facts. In other words, you need to be an active participant in the educational process.

Your studies take the overall form of an enquiry into questions of the sort "How can I improve the quality of my practice?" That enquiry involves you in selecting appropriate sources of information that can help to answer these core questions within the context of your own professional practice. The application of academic resources to evolving practical situations requires you to critically review those sources so that you gain the most appropriate insights into your practice. You must compare and contrast sources to sustain the point of view you are developing and defending.

targets

Where are you now at the start of your ICM studies – and where do you want to be in the future? What sort of improvement do you want to bring about in your abilities? Your journey from now in the present to graduation in the future involves an educational process that brings about change. You can only focus that process by building on your current abilities and aiming at previously-identified outcomes.

At the start of each of the six core units, you will complete a template to create an outline of the current state of your understanding and practice within that subject area; you will summarise the expectations you have for their development through studying the unit concerned. The completed template is essentially an 'educational needs analysis' that describes your personal targets at the start of the unit.

valid

Suppose you are standing in a forest with a friend and you point at a leaf and say "that leaf is green". By uttering these words, you are making a claim to have knowledge. But is this statement true? Is it valid? Do other people agree with you and confirm your words? Do they *believe* your statement, which represents your claim to have knowledge about the leaf?

The test they employ to test the validity of your claim will centre on applying a *standard of judgment* to a *unit of appraisal*. This test is applied to the simplest and to the most complex claims to have knowledge. The unit of appraisal is what is being judged – in this case, the colour of a particular leaf; the standard of judgment includes the criteria we use to test the validity of the claim to knowledge – in this case, the colour that is generally agreed to correspond to the word 'green'. Now imagine how the test for validity would change if you had said "This leaf is *very* green".

During your ICM studies, you will engage with your fellow students in online activities; you will also engage with your tutor when you submit assignments for assessment. The form of this engagement will often require you to make statements about your professional practice and how it is being affected by various aspects of the ICM programme content and process. These statements represent your claims to have generated new knowledge and understanding; these claims must be shown to be valid, as a result of your having described the relevant units of appraisal and discussed appropriate standards of judgment that might be applied. In the context of the CTP unit, validity will rest on a critical use of academic resources and, equally importantly, on the consensus views you reach with your fellow students within the online activities.

educational development

It may stating the obvious, but it is certain that you now have many more skills and much greater knowledge than when you were five years old. This development has come about entirely as the result of education, both the informal education of your day-to-day life and the formal education of the schools, colleges and universities you may have attended. Educational development is the means by which we grow as people in both our private and professional lives. As a result, the story of a person's educational development is unique to that individual, even though the formal input may have been common across a group of individuals.

While it is synonymous with human progress, the process of educational development is not fully understood. However, the CTP unit encourages you to make efforts to understand your own educational development and to give valid descriptions and explanations of it. It requires you to undertake research into your experience of the ICM programme so that your learning is deeper and on a firmer footing because you understand the mechanisms by which it is taking place. You are able to achieve change and also to understand what it means to change by testing the validity of your claim to know your own educational development.

collaborative community

"...Universities are communities where people come together to create and share knowledge ... Universities are so much more than warehouses that sell off-the-shelf qualifications, and students are more than consumers purchasing degree certificates ..."

Source: Michael Farthing (the incoming chair of the 1994 Group, of which the University of Bath is a member) November 2011, BBC online News at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-15738867> accessed 15th November 2011.

The ICM programme is not a one-way process of knowledge flowing from 'The Academy' into your mind. You bring a wealth of personal professional experience to the programme which you will use to contextualise your studies and which you will share with your fellow students in order to broaden the horizons of your cohort. Activities within the Moodle virtual learning environment will encourage the sorts of conversation that will help you to form a 'collaborative community of practice' in which the integration of academic resources and your working practice can take place. Thus, the educational process will consist of sharing insights to build new knowledge and understanding as you work your way through the formal content of the programme.

autobiography

The title of this unit – *Consolidating Theory and Practice* – accurately states its purpose: it requires you to show how you are incorporating academic insights gained from the ICM programme materials into your professional practice. In putting forward descriptions and explanations of your development in this area, you are asserting that you have generated new knowledge and understanding. Writing of this sort is a form of autobiography, in which you are reflecting on your own educational development. It is an autobiography centred on your learning in each core unit, in which you are attempting to make a valid claim that you understand your own educational development as you set targets and strive to realise them.

activities

Your CTP studies run parallel to the six core ICM units. The core subject matter for your study in the core units is contained in the workfiles and associated texts. The CTP unit encourages you to show how this core learning can provide insights into your development as a professional in the construction industry. This process depends on activities centred on conversations that you have with other students in your cohort and with your unit tutors; it also depends on your own critical analysis of how you are attempting to improve your professional practice.

The CTP unit focuses your attention on specific topics for conversation and thought. Each core unit contains a number of activities based around 'Focus Discussion Questions' (FDQs, usually four per unit). These questions can, for example, require you to read a section from a textbook or journal article and then to post an online response. You will be appointed to a group of students that is designed to include a wide mix of prior experience. The core part of each activity will be to reply to each other's responses to the FDQ and explore as fully as possible the implications of it to your individual practices. In this way, you will be able to understand the relevance of the FDQ subject from the viewpoints of working in different firms, jurisdictions and countries.

template

It is a good idea to set yourself targets that you hope to reach while studying each unit. However, part of setting sensible targets also involves understanding the state of your understanding, abilities and shortcomings at the start of the unit. To assist this exercise, you are provided with templates that will help you to structure your pre-unit analysis.

Completing a template will help you to start each new core unit with a clear view of where you are now in the present and where you hope to be at the conclusion of the unit. With the start and end points outlined, you should be better able to structure the journey between them and to add extra attention at specific points.

When you have completed each pair of the six core units, you will integrate material from the completed templates and the record of your online exchanges into each of the three assessed Reflective Commentaries.

educational needs analysis

Each of the units that make up the ICM programme represents an educational journey of discovery. At the start of each of the six core units, you will complete a template that summarises your current state of understanding in that subject area and the targets that you especially wish to meet in the course of your studies.

Twenty years ago, many university programmes of study (then known as 'courses') consisted of a standard diet of content that students were required to memorise. Terminal examinations would then largely test the accuracy of students' ability to recall those facts. By comparison, ICM requires you to situate your learning within the context of your own professional practice. Using the provided template to set personalised targets helps to reveal your educational needs for that target. This educational needs analysis highlights the areas of the unit that will require special attention or which are of particular interest to you.

online dialogue (blogging)

The online activities for each core unit require you to post your initial response to the Focus Discussion Questions and then to discuss these responses with the other members of your discussion group. These dialogues will take the form of online exchanges – usually known as 'blogs' – in which you offer an interactive diary to the scrutiny and comments of others. Using the interactivity inherent in blogging, you present your observations for scrutiny and comment by other members of your group. In this manner, a record develops of the group's thinking about each member's response to the focus discussion question.

Please note that, during your Module 1 studies, your unit tutor (Mick Hancock) and your CTP tutor (Peter Mellett) will be providing careful guidance and feedback to ensure that you develop an appropriate style for this activity.

Reflective Commentary

You will present six written reflective commentaries for assessment during the course of your studies of the six core units. Each reflective commentary contributes one-sixth of the final mark that you receive for the CTP unit. Your aim in writing each reflective commentary is to (using the terminology established in this introduction) *make a valid claim that you understand your own educational development during your study of that unit*. In practical terms, this requirement means that you should show how you can integrate the academic aspects of the unit into your professional practice. You must also point to improvements in your practice and offer supporting evidence by drawing on the archive of your online dialogues and the academic literature.

describes and explains

If you look at most pieces of academic writing, you will see that they consist mainly of *descriptions* and *explanations*. Academic writing is based on analysis, which is the process of breaking down ideas, and on deductive reasoning, which plays a large part in building up new ideas. However, your reflective commentaries are centred on your own personal professional practice and its integration with insights from academic sources. You will therefore write your reflective commentaries in the first person, using the personal pronoun 'I', rather than the third person, as is normally required for your unit assignments and most other forms of academic writing.

Your Reflective Commentaries will consist largely of descriptions and explanations. Put simply, descriptions refer to 'what' and explanations refer to 'why' and 'how'. You should check that the majority of your writing comes under these headings because 'padding' and 'waffle' do not: they are largely superfluous to the narrative you are trying to build. Your aim is to convince your readers (especially your CTP tutor) that your narrative is persuasive and believable. Whilst you are writing in the first person, your readers are not

going to simply 'take your word for it'. The explanations you put forward must be linked to supporting sources such as relevant extracts from your CTP blog and academic textbooks and journals.

insights

Your Reflective Commentaries will contain an analysis of the responses you and your fellow students have made to the Focus Discussion Questions; they will also incorporate ideas from textbooks and academic journals. You will be using all these external sources to support the narrative text that you are writing.

However, you should be careful to use these external sources in an appropriate manner. The reflective commentaries are the story of your personal learning. They are very different in character from the other assignments you undertake during your ICM studies. You are writing in the first person, using the personal pronoun 'I', but you are also required to centre your writing on *descriptions* and *explanations* of your experience.

Thus, you should not write statements of the sort "... so I think this shows that ..." without the inclusion of supporting evidence for your assertions – but, on the other hand, neither should your account simply be a studious analysis of the academic literature surrounding the subject. As you write, you should use extracts from your online discussion archive as insights that strengthen your evolving argument; these should be woven together with a critical analysis of the relevant literature.