



TSU
TRANSPORT
STUDIES UNIT



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Programme

**GLOBAL
CHALLENGES
IN TRANSPORT –
UNDERSTANDING
INFRASTRUCTURES**

2 0 2 5

overview

This intensive executive programme empowers mid-career and senior professionals with the strategic insight and applied tools needed to address the complex challenges of sustainable transport infrastructure. Jointly developed by Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi and the Transport Studies Unit (TSU) at the University of Oxford, the course blends academic rigour with practical relevance and fosters interdisciplinary dialogue across sectors.

The curriculum is structured around the central theme of transport infrastructure and explores four interrelated sub-themes: infrastructure systems and planning, logistics and rail, climate change and infrastructure futures, and smart digital mobilities. Each topic is approached through a global lens while being specifically adapted to the UAE and Gulf context.

Particular attention is given to the dynamics of a rapidly evolving transport corridor between Abu Dhabi and Dubai, positioning the entire region as a global city. Site visits and case studies on local challenges provide concrete insight into policy frameworks, governance mechanisms, and infrastructure innovation across the Gulf.

Participants engage in an interactive and collaborative learning environment, enriched by the presence of internationally recognised experts and peers from diverse backgrounds. Upon completion, they receive a joint certificate from Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi and the University of Oxford, and join a global network of transport professionals and TSU alumni.



A Joint Course by Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi and the University of Oxford

This international programme offers mid-career and senior transport professionals an exceptional opportunity to deepen their understanding of how transport infrastructures are planned, financed, evaluated, governed, and experienced in diverse global contexts. Designed and delivered by Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi and the Transport Studies Unit (TSU) at the University of Oxford, this course brings together academic excellence and contextual relevance, with particular attention to the Gulf region's evolving transport systems.

Participants engage directly with globally recognised experts from Oxford, SUAD, and partner institutions, alongside professionals from the public and private sectors. Through live interactive sessions, independent study, and group work, the course fosters real-time exchange and collaborative learning in a stimulating interdisciplinary environment.

The course goes beyond the physical "hardware" of transport—trains, buses, and roads—to critically examine infrastructure systems such as BRTs, cable cars, and metros, as well as their institutional, political, and human dimensions. Emphasis

is placed on how these systems interact with their users, enabling infrastructure to serve not only as a technical asset, but also as a tool for equity, flexibility, and sustainable urban development.

Over the course of the programme, participants explore diverse theoretical and methodological approaches, drawing from social and environmental sciences, as well as human and physical geography. Sessions are enriched by comparative perspectives and grounded in case studies, with a strong focus on the UAE's unique urban context and the emergence of a globally connected metropolitan region between Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The programme requires an estimated 30-hour time commitment, including individual study, group work, and live sessions. Participants conclude the course by presenting their final projects to a panel of TSU and SUAD faculty and peers, gaining both academic recognition and access to an international network of transport professionals and alumni.

Main topics

- 1 Strategic Infrastructure Planning:**
Design, finance, governance, and implementation across global and local contexts.
- 2 Urban Logistics and Rail Systems:**
Social and spatial impacts of freight and rail, equity, accessibility, and environmental trade-offs.
- 3 Digital Infrastructures and Smart Mobilities:**
Automation, data platforms, MaaS, and their influence on mobility systems.
- 4 Climate-Resilient Transport Systems:**
Mitigation and adaptation strategies, EV infrastructure, and spatial planning.



- 5 Infrastructure and Social Equity:**
Public health, wellbeing, and inclusive access in urban transport.
- 6 Bridging Cities – The Abu Dhabi–Dubai Corridor:**
Applied learning through field visits and regional case studies.
- 7 Future-Oriented Policy and Innovation:**
Scenario tools and interdisciplinary methods for sustainable policy design.

Structure

Academic director(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Juan Pablo Orjuela – University of Oxford • Dr. Benjamin Motte-Baumvol – Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi
Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Juan Pablo Orjuela — Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford (UK) • Prof. Tim Schwanen — Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford (UK) • Dr. Zakiyya Adam — Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford (UK) • Dr. Labib Azzouz — Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford (UK) • Dr. Benjamin Motte-Baumvol — Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi (UAE) • Prof. Elisabetta Cherchi — New York University Abu Dhabi (UAE) • Prof. Laetitia Dablanc — Université Gustave Eiffel (France) • Prof. Richard Shearmur — McGill University (Canada)
Location	Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi
Dates	17-21 November 2025
Learning format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Components: Expert lectures, workshops, peer learning, site visits, conference • Assessment: Group presentations and short policy briefs • Certification: Joint Certificate from Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi and University of Oxford
Programme format	Interactive workshops, seminars, group work, live case studies, peer-learning. Assessment through final group presentations and policy briefs.
Programme themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions to Transport Infrastructures Explore foundational concepts in infrastructure systems, environmental impacts, and transport planning. This day sets the stage for the week, with interdisciplinary framing and group formation for collaborative work. • Logistics, Rail, and Society Examine the planning and governance of logistics and rail systems, including social equity and wellbeing in transport environments. • Conference and Field Visit Participate in the international conference “Bridging Cities: Connectivity and Sustainability in the Dubai–Abu Dhabi Metro-Region” and engage in an applied field visit to a key site in the UAE transport network. • Climate Change and Infrastructure Futures Focus on mitigation and adaptation strategies, the future of EV infrastructure, and how workplace geographies shape infrastructure transitions. • Smart Mobilities and Digital Infrastructures Analyse the role of digital technologies in reshaping infrastructure systems, with a final wrap-up session on learnings and policy implications.
Programme structure and modules	<p>This Executive Education programme is structured as a five-day intensive course divided into thematic days.</p> <p>The course requires an estimated 30-hour commitment, which includes a mix of individual study, group collaboration, and live sessions. Independent study involves engaging with core lectures and supplementary materials provided by the instructors. Throughout the programme, participants will work in small interdisciplinary teams on applied case studies and policy challenges. At the end of the course, each group will present their findings and recommendations to peers and researchers from Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi and the Transport Studies Unit (TSU), University of Oxford.</p>



The Executive Education Programme on “Global Challenges in Transport – Understanding Infrastructures” is delivered across **five consecutive days**, combining academic lectures, case studies, field visits, and group-based learning. Each day focuses on a specific thematic area:

COURSE SCHEDULE

Day 1: Introduction and Sustainability Foundations

- Welcome and introduction to the course (Dr. Juan Pablo Orjuela & Dr. Benjamin Motte-Baumvol)
- Overview of transport infrastructures and environmental impacts (Prof. Tim Schwanen, University of Oxford)
- Group project launch and collaborative workshops

Day 2: Logistics, Rail, and Social Dimensions

- Urban logistics infrastructures (Prof. Laetitia Dablanc, Université Gustave Eiffel, France)
- Rail systems and social exclusion (Dr. Labib Azzouz, University of Oxford, UK)
- Health and wellbeing in transport spaces (Dr. Zakiyya Adam, University of Oxford, UK)
- Applied group work

Day 3: Connectivity & Regional Development

- **Conference:** Bridging Cities: Connectivity & Sustainability in the Dubai–Abu Dhabi Metro-Region
- Site visit to a major infrastructure project in the UAE
- Networking dinner

Day 4: Climate Change and Infrastructure Futures

- EV infrastructure and transitions (Prof. Elisabetta Cherchi, NYU Abu Dhabi, UAE)
- Adaptation and mitigation strategies in transport (Prof. Tim Schwanen, University of Oxford, UK)
- Workplace geography as a catalyst for infrastructure change (Prof. Richard Shearmur, McGill University, Canada)
- Group project development

Day 5: Smart Mobilities and Digital Transitions

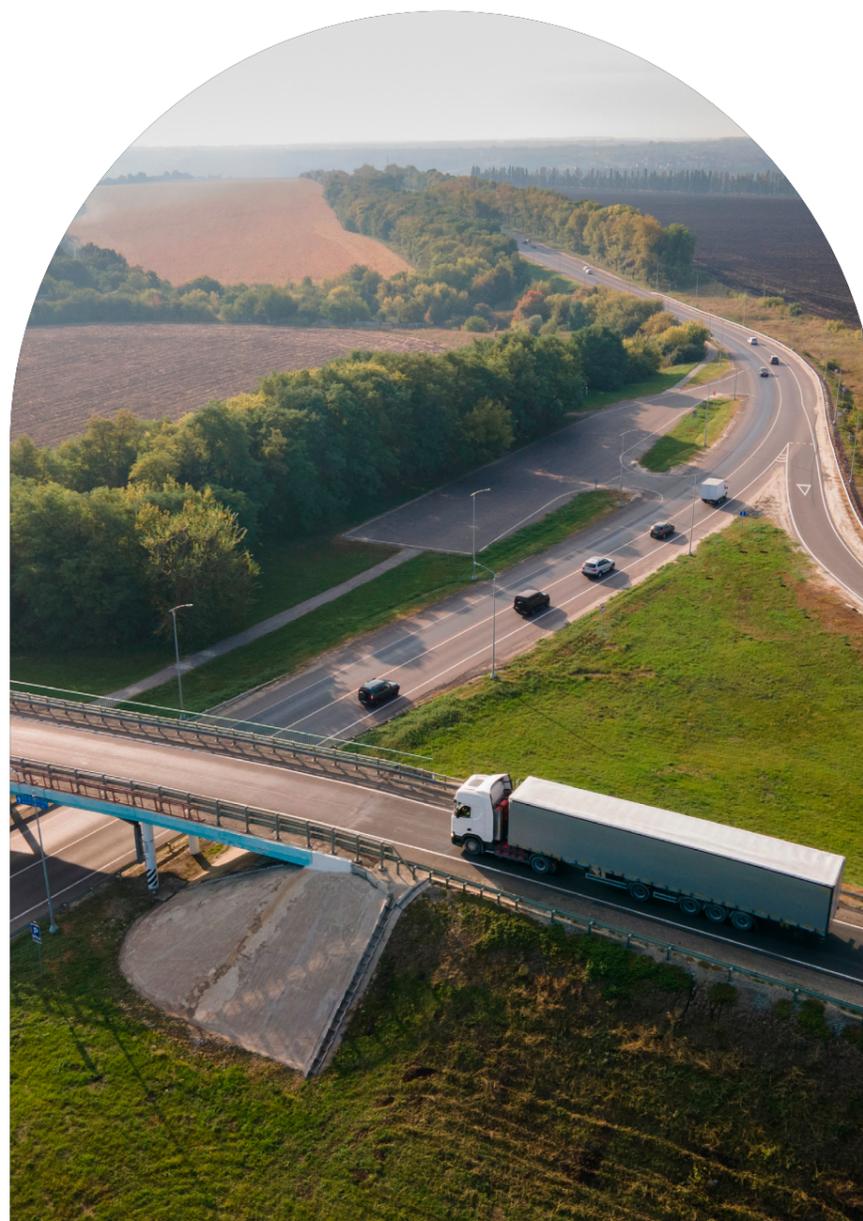
- Digital technologies as transport infrastructures (Dr. Benjamin Motte-Baumvol, SUAD, UAE)
- Final presentations and feedback (Dr. Juan Pablo Orjuela & Prof. Tim Schwanen)

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion, participants will:

- Apply best practices and frameworks to infrastructure planning and governance.
- Connect infrastructure systems to broader themes: climate, governance, digitalisation, equity.
- Develop low-carbon, inclusive, and resilient transport strategies.
- Strengthen analytical, collaborative, and policy communication skills.
- Engage with stakeholders across public and private sectors.
- Contribute to evidence-based innovation in transport infrastructure.

They will benefit from the combined learning environments of Oxford and Sorbonne, engage with world-leading experts, and join a global network shaped by the TSU's 50-year legacy of interdisciplinary excellence.



Prospective students

- Industry: Transport, urban planning, infrastructure, public policy, sustainability
- Seniority: Mid-level managers, senior executives, policy-makers
- Job role: Urban transport planners, engineers, consultants, mobility managers, regulators
- Education: Bachelor's or Master's in transport, engineering, economics, planning, etc.
- Organisation type: Government agencies, consulting firms, development authorities, academia

Admission prospects

This programme is designed for ambitious professionals and researchers with at least three years of experience in the transport and mobility sectors. It offers a unique opportunity to engage with internationally renowned experts from academia, public policy, and industry, and to deepen one's strategic and interdisciplinary understanding of infrastructure challenges and sustainable transport solutions.

Participants will benefit from a high-level learning environment that combines academic excellence with real-world insight, helping them expand their professional network and accelerate their impact.

We welcome applications from:

- Professionals leading innovation and infrastructure strategies in transport, mobility, logistics, or consulting.
- Practitioners with experience in urban planning, transport operations, environmental strategy, or infrastructure finance.
- Researchers and academics in transport studies, civil engineering, geography, or urban development seeking to strengthen their engagement with practice and policy.

Tuition Fees

(including VAT):

AED 25,830 (approximately US\$ 7,033)

To learn more

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<https://www.sorbonne.ae/executive-education/>

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Why Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi ?

In today's fast-paced and globalised economies, knowledge and languages both serve an important role in creating progressive and vibrant societies. The French education system is known for its high level of rigorous critical thinking and debating skills, which play a significant role in developing future pioneers and leaders.

Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi is a globally recognised education institution that serves as a bridge between civilisations by offering a multicultural environment, which promotes and develops a strong culture of tolerance, curiosity, harmony and cultural awareness for today's modern economy. Students have access to internationally acclaimed faculty, world-class facilities and internationally certified degrees, which places them firmly on the right path in preparation for a successful career.

About the Transport Studies Unit (TSU), University of Oxford

The Transport Studies Unit (TSU), based in the School of Geography and the Environment at the University of Oxford (UK), has been a global leader in transport research for over 50 years. It is internationally renowned for its interdisciplinary approach to understanding the social, environmental, economic, and political dimensions of mobility and transport systems.

The TSU's research tackles some of the most pressing global challenges—climate change, urban inequality, sustainability, and transport justice—by bridging the gap between academic research and policy innovation. It actively collaborates with academic institutions, governments, civil society, and industry stakeholders to co-produce knowledge that is both critical and actionable.

By drawing from human geography, sociology, political economy, and environmental sciences, the TSU advances theoretical and empirical insights on how transport infrastructures are governed, financed, accessed, and experienced. This integrated approach has positioned the TSU at the forefront of major policy debates on low-carbon transitions, urban accessibility, mobility rights, and smart transport futures.

The TSU also plays a pivotal role in executive education and capacity building, training the next generation of transport professionals, scholars, and policymakers. It maintains an active global alumni network that continues to shape policy and infrastructure strategies across continents.

University of Oxford – Excellence with Global Impact

The University of Oxford is one of the oldest and most prestigious academic institutions in the world, with over 900 years of intellectual tradition. It is consistently ranked among the top universities globally and has been placed first worldwide in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings for nine consecutive years (2017–2025).

With a truly international outlook, Oxford is home to more than 26,000 students, 46% of whom are international, representing over 160 countries and territories. The University fosters global research collaboration and maintains world-leading outputs across all academic disciplines.

Oxford contributes significantly to both scholarship and society. It plays a vital role in the UK's knowledge economy, generating over £16.9 billion annually and supporting more than 90,000 full-time jobs. Its legacy combines academic excellence, global reach, and a commitment to addressing the world's most urgent challenges through cutting-edge research, teaching, and innovation.



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