

University of Cambridge: Programme Specifications

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MASTER OF STUDIES IN SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP

1	Awarding body	University of Cambridge
2	Teaching institution	Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership
3	Accreditation details	Master of Studies,
4	Name of final award	Master of Studies
5	Programme title	MSt Sustainability Leadership
6	JACS code(s)	N190
7	Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	None
8	Qualifications framework level	7 (Masters)
9	Date specification produced/ last revised	June 2009
10	Date specification last reviewed	February 2010

Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership (CPSL), an institute within the School of Technology, has run executive development in sustainability for 15 years, with open programmes in the UK, Europe, North America, South America, South Africa and Australia, and tailored programmes for the World Bank, Chinese government leaders and large corporations such as BP, PwC and Anglo American. CPSL's accredited Masters-level Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business is now in its 11th year and its online learning tutorial (Chronos) serves more than 200 organisations and 150,000 licensed users around the world. CPSL now has an alumni base of over 2,000 senior leaders from business, government and civil society around the world.

Aims of the Programme

The programme aims to:

- Develop leaders who have a wide awareness and deep understanding of the social, environmental, ethical and economic challenges facing the world, and equip them to respond more effectively in their executive roles.
- Expose leaders and future leaders to a range of best-practice cases of how business, government and civil society are responding to these challenges.
- Help leaders to make a compelling 'business case' for sustainability in their sector and/or institutional context, and understand how best to put sustainability policies into practice.
- Give leaders insights into the academic debate on sustainability, including some of the key scientific and technological issues, and equip them with research skills relevant to sustainability.

Learning Outcomes of the Programme

Knowledge and Understanding

- To have a broad understanding of the global social, environmental, economic and ethical 'system pressures' affecting business, government and civil society.
- To have a more detailed knowledge of four sustainability themes, namely: climate change, ecosystem services, poverty and development, and governance, economics and ethics.
- To obtain a multi-disciplinary perspective on sustainability, with insights from Schools and departments across the University, and to understand the contribution of these fields in addressing sustainability challenges.
- To have a clear understanding of the major arguments advanced in the 'business case' for sustainability, as well as the research and limitations surrounding these claims.
- To gain knowledge on the different theories, types, actors and levels of change and to be able to apply these to a sustainability context.
- To develop an appreciation for the variety of institutional responses to sustainability, including policy development, codes and standards, management and reporting systems and stakeholder engagement and activism.
- To be able to apply forward-looking approaches like strategic thinking and scenario planning to sustainability futures.

Skills

- To show the ability to be reflective and reflexive with regard to sustainability world views or paradigms and the organisational and personal assumptions that shape those views.
- To be able to work across subject disciplines, institutional sectors and functional silos in order to advance sustainability goals.
- To be able to competently follow and contribute to academic and practitioner debates on sustainability.
- To develop the ability to communicate sustainability-related messages effectively to non-sustainability target audiences.
- To be able to work effectively in a group setting (in situ and remotely) and to show the ability to learn from this experience.
- To demonstrate the ability to do sound applied research in sustainability, using a relevant research methodology, and to write up the findings convincingly.
- To embody the characteristics of a change agent for sustainability, especially the ability to identify, package and 'sell' sustainability-related ideas.

Teaching and Learning Methods

There are four primary approaches to teaching and learning:

- Taught sessions by academics and practitioners, who are thought-leaders or case study illustrators.
- E-learning, including on-line content based discussions
- Group work, involving dialogue, debate and presentations throughout the taught modules, as well as a group research assignment.
- Individual work, involving research and written presentation of findings on selected topics.
- Support and facilitation by a CPSL-led team of faculty, tutors and supervisors from within the University.
- Supplemental online materials and collaborative e-platforms to maximize knowledge sharing.

Assessment Methods

- Students will complete three written assignments, including a Case Review of 3,000 words, Group Project of 5,000-7,000 words and a Strategy Paper of 3,000 words.
- Students will carry out an action research assignment, in which students have to demonstrate a practical project, with an oral presentation.
- Students will complete a 15,000 word dissertation, including notes and appendices, proposed by the candidate and approved by the Degree Committee.

Programme Structure

YEAR 1

September



Residential Workshop 1 (6 days in Cambridge)

- Module 1: System-level pressures (global social, environmental, economic & ethical challenges) and societal responses (policy, technology, consumer & lifestyle changes)
- Module 2: Institutional responses (business, government and civil society), including sector-based initiatives and the business case
- Module 3: Leadership, strategy & change management for sustainability, including scenarios for the future and individual change-agency
- Briefing on Assignment 1: Case Study
- Briefing on Assignment 2: Group Project

October - March



- E-learning Sessions (online content-based discussion) in November and February

April



Residential Workshop 2 (6 days in Cambridge)

- Module 4: The economics of sustainability and the role of the finance sector
- Module 5: The politics of sustainability and the role of policy initiatives
- Module 6: Research methods
- *Submission of Assignment 1: Case Study*
- Progress Review of Assignment 2: Group Project
- Briefing on Assignment 3: Strategy Paper

May - August



- E-learning Sessions (online content-based discussion) in June and August
- *Submission of Assignment 2: Group Project in July*

YEAR 2

September



Residential Workshop 3 (6 days in Cambridge)

- Module 7: Climate change (science, mitigation & adaptation) and energy, including carbon pricing/taxing and other policy instruments
- Module 8: Ecosystems & biodiversity, including market mechanisms and social and environmental valuation
- Module 9: Regions, cities, infrastructure & supply chains, including sustainable manufacturing, engineering and interdisciplinary design
- *Submission of Assignment 3: Strategy Paper*
- Briefing on Assignment 4: Action Research Project
- Briefing on dissertation and discussion of research ideas

October - March



E-learning Sessions (online content-based discussion) in November and February

April



Residential Workshop 4 (6 days in Cambridge)

- Module 10: Governance, ethics and values, including transparency and accountability
- Module 11: Poverty, social enterprise and emerging markets, including inclusive business
- Module 12: Cross-sector partnerships & stakeholder engagement
- *Presentation of Assignment 4: Action Research Project*
- Submission of Dissertation Proposal (including Research Methodology)

May - August



- E-learning Sessions (online dissertation-based discussions) in June and July
- *Submission of Literature Review in May*
- *Submission of Research Findings in July*
- *Submission of Dissertation in August*
- Completion of Dissertation Assessment and Recommendation for Award of Degree in October
- Degree Ceremony (29 November)

Programme Requirements

Candidates are screened and accepted on the basis that they:

1. Have an acceptable proficiency in English (speaking and writing).
2. Have demonstrated an ability to complete research-related assignments, either at an undergraduate level or in a professional work context.
3. Fit the profile of the MSt's target market, namely:
 - a. *Mid-career sustainability professionals*, i.e. those in sustainability-related corporate departments, government departments, civil society organisations and social enterprises with significant practitioner experience who wish to advance their career prospects in sustainability.
 - b. *Early career sustainability graduates*, i.e. those with an undergraduate sustainability-related qualification, but little practical experience, who wish to fast-track their sustainability career in business, government or civil society, while gaining work experience.
 - c. *Mid-career professionals*, i.e. those who are enjoying successful careers in other disciplines (engineering, accounting, marketing, international development, etc.), but who wish to include a focus on sustainability in their work.

Admissions for the MSt are processed through the Institute for Continuing Education, which is responsible for record-keeping, based on the recommendations of the Course Director, who is advised by the Course Degree Sub-committee (Academic Advisory Group).

Successful completion of the Programme requires that candidates:

1. Attend all the Residential Workshops.
2. Participate fully in the Workshops and Group Project.
3. Submit and pass Assignments 1-3 (written assessment) and complete Assignment 4 (oral assessment). They have an opportunity to resubmit one failed assignment.
4. Demonstrate an ability to do high quality, original, applied research and writing, for the purpose of the Assignments and the Dissertation.
5. Submit and pass the Dissertation. As this is a Taught Masters, the dissertation is only a partial requirement for the award of the degree.

Past graduates (from 2006/07) of the Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business (PCSB) can be given credit towards the MSt. The MSt has specifically been designed so that the first workshop and Assignments 1-3 are equivalent to the requirements of PCSB. Consequently, past PCSB graduates would not be required to attend Workshop 1 or to repeat Assignments 1-3.

Design Principles

The MSt will be guided in its development by the following principles:

- *Understanding global challenges* – including the development of systems thinking around social, environmental and ethical issues, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty and corruption.
- *Examining effective responses* – by looking at best practices in government action, business practice and civil society activity, including enablers such as technology, policy, finance and consumers.
- *Focusing on leadership* – including what is required of senior leaders from business, government and civil society to understand and effectively respond to the challenges and dilemmas they face.
- *Encouraging an interdisciplinary approach* – drawing on the depth of knowledge and experience faculties across the university and from other CPSL programmes, and encouraging a diverse mix of sector and industry leaders.
- *Promoting an international agenda* – through the issues covered and the participants' profile, the course will focus on developed and developing country contexts, as well as at a regional and global level.
- *Balancing academia and practice* – by using the world-class academic resources of Cambridge University and also bringing in the most insightful guest contributors from business, government and civil society.
- *Adopting blended learning* – including interactive, taught residential workshops in Cambridge, individual and group assignments, supplemental e-learning and a research dissertation.

Graduate Employability

As the MSt is a part-time degree, many of the participants will be in existing employment and will use the course to improve their career prospects. The course takes an applied approach to knowledge, with both the teaching and assignments oriented towards relevance to their work situation.

It is also clear from our research into the sustainability market that this is a growing field of work, both as a result of the high profile global policy developments (such as those around climate change) and significant financial stimulus investments in the “green jobs” sector.

Managing Teaching Quality and Standards

CPSL is careful in the selection in those involved in delivery of the programme, and provides significant support, guidance and briefing to ensure that delivery is to CPSL's high delivery standards. This includes tutor handbooks, speaker briefings, and norming exercises to ensure tutors are all marking to the same standard.

Participants rate each workshop – including every taught session – and these feed into an evaluation of the teaching, content, process and the extent to which these meets participants' learning objectives. The programme team and tutors review this feedback and take it into account when planning future workshops.

In addition, CPSL uses the assessment practices recommended by the University guidelines (<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/quality/assessment/practices.html>). Specifically, this includes:

- Supplying detailed marking criteria to assessors
- Using double marking where discrepancies arise
- Preparing model answers, e.g. sharing the best (anonymised) past papers
- Using a University-wide grading scheme
- Mechanisms for the exchange of opinion, e.g. undertaking a 'norming exercise' at the beginning of each course to check the relative grading of assessors.
- Subjecting course work to review by internal and external examiners.

The Course Director of the MSt is advised by a Course Degree Sub-committee or Academic Advisory Group, comprised of representatives from the Engineering, Judge, Land Economy, Geography and Architecture – most likely those academics or Course directors running sustainability-related Masters programmes in these departments.

Student Support

- Students receive briefing materials and a course handbook ahead of the first workshop.
- Course materials and supplementary materials are all available electronically on the CPSL Learning Zone
- Students are assigned to syndicate groups for the duration of the course, which provide a tutor and peer support network
- Students have personal access to the Course Director and course contributors
- The residential workshops include sessions on research methodology, to help students prepare for their dissertations
- Regular (mostly bi-monthly) online e-learning discussions are held between residential workshops
- Each student will be allocated a Director of Studies for their course work and a Supervisor for their dissertation

Indicators of Quality

CPSL programmes all have two key indicators of quality:

- Participant feedback
- Examiner's feedback

In terms of participant feedback, the Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business, the course has had a quality rating of over 80% for the past three years.

In terms of examiner's feedback, the following comments from the Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business examiner's meeting minutes are indicative: *"The examiners indicated that they were, in general, very happy with the quality of work submitted and of tutor feedback."*

Further information

CPSL has over 2,000 alumni from its other programmes, which have run over the past 20 years, including over 300 alumni of the Postgraduate Certificate on Sustainable Business. Many of these alumni have expressed interest in opportunities for further learning.

A few examples of expressions of interest already received include:

- "I've been searching high and low for a Masters that balances the academic with the practical in an interdisciplinary way, so I was very excited to have chanced upon the MSt as it fits that bill perfectly." (Corporate Affairs Manager, PwC UK)
- "I would like to express my interest in the Masters. I did the Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business in 2007 and I am looking for proper follow up since." (Manager, Fortis Bank, Netherlands)
- "When you have some clarification on the possibility of running a part-time Masters in Sustainable Business Leadership at the University of Cambridge please let me know as I would be most eager to submit my application." (Project manager, Swiss Re, Switzerland)
- "This is a very important course especially for those of us involved in development work and from Africa where leadership is the most important single factor missing in development plans and agenda." (Project Manager Africa, Fairtrade Foundation, UK)
- "The Masters in Sustainability Leadership really caught up my attention, because the content seems to be very applicable. Moreover, the fact that the programme focuses on forming leaders and is part-time is very good, because the attendants will be able to learn and test the ideas that they just developed. The multicultural and interdisciplinary approach will help attendants to enrich discussions, envision new possibilities and even break paradigms." (Management trainee, BASF, Brazil)

Further information on CPSL's courses and programmes can be found at:
www.cpsl.cam.ac.uk.