University of Cambridge: Programme Specifications

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this programme specification. Programme specifications are produced and then reviewed annually by the relevant faculty or department and revised where necessary. However, we reserve the right to withdraw, update or amend this programme specification at any time without notice.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for all awards of the University is available online at: www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/camdata/archive.html

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

1	Awarding body	University of Cambridge
2	Teaching institution	Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership
3	Accreditation details	Postgraduate Certificate, 60 CATS points
4	Name of final award	Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business
5	Programme title	Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business
6	JACS code(s)	N190
7	Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	None
8	Qualifications framework level	FHEQ Level 7
9	Date specification produced/ last revised	June 2009
10	Date specification last reviewed	April 2012

The University of Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership (CPSL) works with business, government and civil society to build leaders' capacity to meet the needs of society and address critical global challenges. Our seminars and leadership groups and our partnerships with those who make or influence decisions are designed to transform public and private sector policies and practices and build greater understanding of our interdependence with one another and the natural world. Our Network of alumni brings together the most influential leaders in the world who share an interest in and a commitment to creating a sustainable future.

CPSL is an institution within the School of Technology. We work in close collaboration with individual academics and many other departments of the University. HRH The Prince of Wales is our patron and we are also a member of The Prince's Charities, a group of not-for-profit organisations of which His Royal Highness is President.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business is a eight-month, part-time masters-level programme. This programme has been offered for 15years and is a challenging and inspiring programme which addresses many of the key challenges being experienced by organisations seeking to embed sustainability principles and practices into mainstream business operations. Project-based learning to support strategy development and implementation is a key feature of the programme. It is targeted at current and future business leaders, particularly those in mainstream business roles.

Aims of the Programme
PCSB's aim is to help organisations address the following challenges, and to identify the strategic opportunities for sustainable practice:

- Defining the boundaries of corporate responsibility in relation to today's global challenges

- Devising and implementing effective approaches to socially responsible business, which at the same time encourage innovation and competitiveness

- Responding to the diverse social, environmental and economic expectations of stakeholders and society at large

- Identifying the critical skills and experience that will enable an organisation to achieve its sustainability objectives.

Learning Outcomes of the Programme

Understanding and awareness:	• Display a broad understanding of current and emerging sustainability issues, their relevance to business, and be familiar with the evolution of the sustainability debate and with the conceptual frameworks that underpin it.
	• Understand the systemic failings that drive unsustainabilities in our current economic system, and recognise the paradigm shifts necessary to achieve a sustainable economy
	• Recognise and understand a range of perspectives and worldviews which shape stakeholder (including shareholder) opinion and actions.
	• Identify relevant aspects of the social, economic, political and legislative environment, and recognise their links to sustainable development and their relevance to their own organisation's strategies and operations.
Evaluation and analysis:	• Understand and interpret academic and practitioner theory and apply to business
	• Engage with complexity and contradictions in the knowledge base
	• Apply their own criteria and judgement to sustainability issues
	• Understand a range of theories of organisational change and analyse own organisation's approach to change
	• Challenge and critically review evidence and propositions
Critical review, challenge, engagement and collaboration:	• Engage in professional debate about sustainability issues with colleagues from other job functions
	• Work collaboratively across organisations, functions, sectors and regions
Innovation, creativity and strategy:	• Respond innovatively and creatively to emerging social and economic trends that pose risks or opportunities for their organisation
	• Frame and develop business strategies that address (one or more) sustainability challenges
	• Utilise and enhance mainstream business strategy and processes to achieve sustainability goals
	• Adapt mainstream strategy to build in resilience

Teaching methods

- Academic and practitioner inputs on key issues: contributors drawn from the University of Cambridge and from other teaching and research institutions, as well as leading edge practitioners from within the programme's extensive network
- Individual and collaborative project work: Theoretical and practical are undertaken by participants, using their own professional settings as the main point of reference
- Support and facilitation provided by a team of programme tutors
- Informal and formal collaboration with fellow participants via email, teleconferences, face-to-face meetings,
- A dedicated online virtual learning environment to support sharing of learning and resources.

Assessment

Assignment	*Length (words)*	*Contribution to final grade*
1 – Analysis Paper	3000	30%
2 - Group Project	7000	30% for submitted assignment 10% for personal contribution to group project
3 - Strategy Paper	3000	30%

Participants are required to achieve a pass grade on all written work. However, if only one piece of work is graded a fail, participants will be given detailed guidance by their tutor and allowed to re-submit

Programme Structure

1. A three week preparatory phase
2. A 2 day workshop in Cambridge, plus two, 2.5-day workshops, also held in Cambridge
3. A work-based, collaborative project (assessed)
4. Two individual tasks: a Sustainability Challenge leading to an Analysis Paper and a Strategy Paper (both assessed)

Workshop One: System Pressures and Trends: The Role of Business

Themes covered:
System pressures and trends;
Corporate and government responses;
Sustainable development principles, frameworks and trends;

Issues in focus: 1. Achieving a low carbon economy;
                 2. Poverty, Inequality and emerging markets.

Workshop 2: Exploring the Context for Action

Themes covered:
Systems analysis: exploring drivers and assumptions;
Prospects for international and cross-sectoral cooperation;
The role of capital markets;
Consumers and consumption;
The role of business in good government;
Leadership for sustainability.

Workshop 3: Taking Action: Moving towards Sustainability

Themes covered:
Communicating sustainability;
Partnerships for sustainability;
Personal values and ethics;
Is technology the answer?
Business/government interface;
Innovation and entrepreneurship.

Cross Cutting themes explored within the Programme include:
Organisational change;
Systems thinking;
Futures thinking;
Cooperation and partnerships;
Leadership.

Programme Requirements

- Possession of an acceptable first degree or equivalent professional qualification;
- An acceptable ability in written and spoken English language;
- An endorsement from their employing institution or, if independent, from an acceptable institution familiar with their work;
- Access to appropriate computer technology and internet software; and
- An ability to pay the course fees or to identify a sponsoring institution.

Further information

Who Should attend ?

The Programme is designed for senior and mid-career managers who want to explore business practices and opportunities in the area of sustainability and are looking to increase their own personal development in the field. Typical job titles include functional heads such as Director of Marketing, Director of Corporate Communications and Director of Public Affairs; and specialist managers such as Sustainable Development Manager, Environmental Director, Stakeholder Relations Director and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Executive, amongst others.

Whether or not they have specific responsibility for environmental or sustainability issues, it is hoped that participants' organisations' commitment to embedding and mainstreaming sustainable development will ensure that they are prepared to support participation in the Programme.

Applicants from outside the UK are welcomed. The web-based Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) assists geographically remote participants to participate fully in group projects.

Graduate Employability

There is a perceived growth in 'green collar jobs' in the UK and internationally. This programme enhances the ability of candidates to secure, and to perform well in those jobs. Companies are also increasingly requiring candidates for mainstream jobs to have a sophisticated understanding of sustainability issues and responses, and the PCSB programme therefore increases candidates' general employability.

It is understood that PCSB is now acknowledged to be the leading accredited sustainability leadership programme in the UK, and possibly internationally.

Managing Teaching Quality and Standards

Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership 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.

Each workshop is fully evaluated on the content, process and the extent to which it meets participants' objectives. The programme team and tutors review this feedback and take it into account when planning future workshops.

Assessment practice
In common with other Faculties and Departments, CPSL takes particular care to ensure that common standards are applied across all elements of examinations and across all candidates. This means:
   i)   assessment is undertaken consistently to ensure that standards are set and maintained at an appropriate level and that the learning outcomes are properly considered;
   ii)   principles, procedures and processes of all assessments are explicit, valid and reliable;
   iii)   there are robust mechanisms for marking and for the moderation of marks and that assessment is conducted with rigour, fairness and a due regard for security.

CPSL uses the following assessment practices recommended by the University guidelines: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/quality/assessment/practices.html

   i)   detailed marking criteria (see Annex 1 Table 1)
            these are drawn up for specific courses (and, where appropriate, specific modules and assignments) as a benchmark against which the assessors mark work; the criteria are circulated (e.g. in course handbooks and on the Learning Zone) to allow participants to plan their study and reflect on the outcome of their assessment

ii) *double marking*
this ensures robustness of assessment particularly in more qualitative fields where subjectivity may be involved. CPSL has clear guidelines (see below) for assessors over what further action is required where marking discrepancies arise

iii) *model answers*
in order to guide participants on matters of focus and emphasis, examples of (anonymised) past papers are posted on the Virtual Learning Environment;

iv) *grading scheme (see Annex 1 Table 2)*
CPSL adopts a University-wide grading scheme which aims to assess performance while allowing for appropriate discrimination between candidates;

v) *mechanisms for the exchange of opinion*
CPSL ensures that assessors (tutors) undertake a 'norming exercise' at the beginning of each course. This entails the grading of identical sets of three sample papers (of varying quality) prior to the course – and then meeting up to compare assessment approaches and the application of criteria and the grading scheme. A second 'exchange of opinion' forum is the Examiners' meeting which takes place 8-10 weeks after the course – this is an opportunity for 3 examiners to comment on the grading and feedback provided by the assessors (tutors), prior to confirming final grades.

Student Support
Participants are provided with significant support, including:
- participants handbook and guidelines
- an online resource base
- a dedicated Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership team to handle enquiries and deal with any issues that may arise
- each participant is allocated a tutor who has primary responsibility for supporting their academic work on the programme. Tutors are available at and beyond workshops (via phone and email, and where necessary for face to face meetings).

Other Benefits of attending

- On completion of PCSB, participants are invited to join the Cambridge Sustainability Network which brings together leaders over 3,000 senior decision-makers, thought-leaders, policy-influencers and executives from across the world who share an interest in and a commitment to creating a sustainable future.
- Opportunities to network with peers and to benchmark against other organisations active in the field of sustainability

Indicators of Quality
The programme has two key indicators of quality:

- Participant feedback
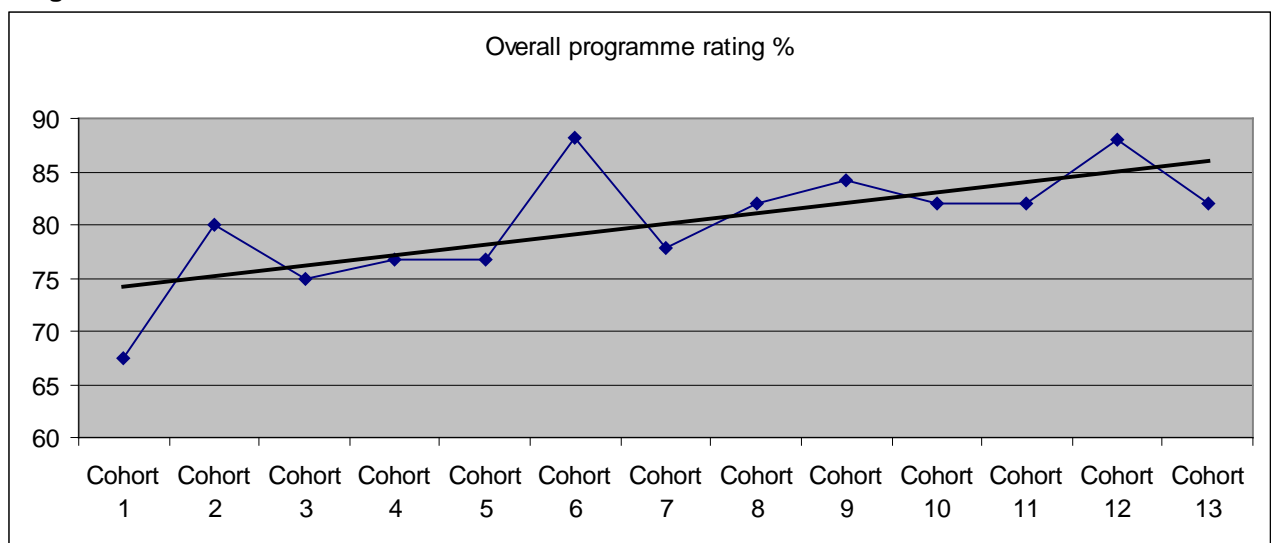- Examiner's feedback

Participant feedback
Participant evaluation of the programme is carefully reviewed. The following chart shows participants' overall rating of the programme for each cohort, including a trend line which indicates an overall upwards trend.

Ratings for each workshop
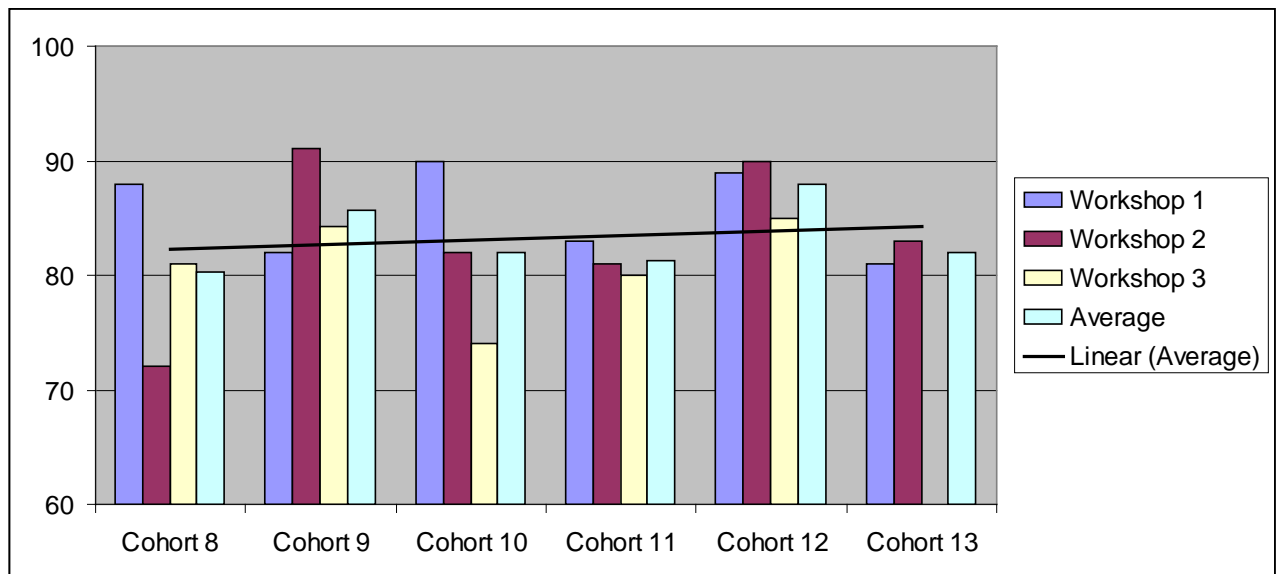
For the last three cohorts, the final workshop has been the weakest of the three

Long term trend

Overall programme rating %

Examiners feedback
The following comments are extracted from recent examination process:

"*As usual, the work presented across this year's portfolios was of a good standard, often interesting and with some refreshingly different perspectives taken by one or two of the candidates this year. The assignments were very appropriate in terms of assessing the learning outcomes of the course and the assessment criteria involved were both well designed and appropriately applied. The course has continued its key strength of helping those already involved in the management of organizations to reflect on how their organizations and particular projects close to their interests interrelate with the key concepts and issues on the sustainable business agenda.* " Examiner's meeting minutes 2009

"The examiners indicated that they were, in general, very happy with the quality of work submitted and of tutor feedback, in fact it was agreed that the participants are very fortunate to receive such detailed and constructive feedback. It was noted that there was good evidence of candidate progression from the first to the second papers." Examiner's meeting minutes 2009

"The work of the students that I saw this year was generally of a good standard. Indeed, the impression I had from this year's cohort is that the quality of their work was better than last year's. Much improved was the use of the academic literature –. The best quality work I saw was of a high standard. " External Examiner's Report 2010

"Overall the standard of the work was generally what one would expect at post-graduate level and compared to the last time that I was involved as an examiner I believe a much better balance has been struck within the work between the academic and practical dimensions of knowledge and their integration by the candidate.

Overall though some really interesting work has been developed by the candidates and their development within the course is clear to see through the quality of the work." External Examiner's Report 2012

"Overall I am satisfied that robust and fair procedures have been put in place to review students work. The completed mark sheets show that the course examiners take their task seriously and provide detailed justifications for their marks; this detailed feedback also benefits students." University Moderator's Report 2012