

## Programme Specifications

### POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

<b>1 Awarding body</b>	University of Cambridge
<b>2 Teaching institution</b>	Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership
<b>3 Accreditation details</b>	N/A
<b>4 Name of final award</b>	Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business
<b>5 Programme title</b>	Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business
<b>6 JACS code(s)</b>	N190
<b>7 Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)</b>	None
<b>8 Qualifications framework level</b>	FHEQ Level 7
<b>9 Date specification produced</b>	June 2015

The University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL), an institute within the School of Technology, has run executive development programmes in sustainability for 26 years, with open programmes in the UK, Europe, North America, South America, South Africa and Australia, and customised programmes for many leading organisations.. CISL has a global alumni base of over 6,500 senior leaders from business, government and civil society.

CISL also offer a Master of Studies in Sustainability Leadership, a Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Value Chains and a Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business is a nine-month, part-time master's-level programme. This programme has been offered for 18 years 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 aims 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.

Participants successfully completing the programme will:

- Gain a Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business accredited by the University of Cambridge;
- Deepen their understanding of how sustainability issues impact on their sector, their organisation and their role;
- Develop the means to articulate the business case for sustainability, whilst balancing stakeholders' needs
- Analyse global business challenges, responses and organisational change;
- Build confidence to discuss emerging trends and issues which affect the business agenda with senior colleagues;
- Explore best practice and learn collaboratively with other professionals with different perspectives and experts in the field;
- Enhance their skills and experience in embedding sustainability in mainstream business operations and driving organisational change
- Become a member of the Cambridge Sustainability Network, which includes over 6,500 CISL alumni, faculty and contributors from around the world, who are leading the way in turning sustainability thinking into practice.

### Learning Outcomes of the Programme

<i>Understanding and awareness:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the systemic failings that drive unsustainable behaviour in our current economic system, and recognise the paradigm shifts necessary to achieve a sustainable economy</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise and understand a range of perspectives and worldviews which shape stakeholder (including shareholder) opinion and actions.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<i>Evaluation and analysis:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and interpret academic and practitioner theory and apply to business</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with complexity and contradictions in the knowledge base</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply their own criteria and judgement to sustainability issues</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand a range of theories of organisational change and analyse own organisation's approach to change</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge and critically review evidence and propositions</li> </ul>
<i>Critical review, challenge, engagement and collaboration:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in professional debate about sustainability issues with colleagues from other job functions</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work collaboratively across organisations, functions, sectors and regions</li> </ul>
<i>Innovation, creativity and strategy:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond innovatively and creatively to emerging social and economic trends that pose risks or opportunities for their organisation</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frame and develop business strategies that address (one or more) sustainability challenges</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise and enhance mainstream business strategy and processes to achieve sustainability goals</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt mainstream strategy to build in resilience</li> </ul>

## Teaching methods

- Academic and expert practitioner inputs on key issues: contributors are 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 assignments and collaborative project work: both theoretical and practical in nature, these 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

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Length (words)</b>	<b>Contribution to final grade</b>
<b>1 – Analysis Paper</b>	3000	33%
<b>2 - Group Project</b>	7000	33% including a % for personal contribution to group project
<b>3 - Strategic Action Plan</b>	3000	33%

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

## Programme Structure

1. A three week preparatory phase, involving pre-reading and identification of a sustainability challenge within participants' organisational contexts;
2. One 2.5 day workshop and two 3 day workshops, all held in Cambridge and each preceded by pre-workshop reading and preparatory activities;
3. A work-based, collaborative research project (assessed);
4. Two individual tasks based on the identified sustainability challenge: an Analysis Paper and a Strategic Action Plan (both assessed).

The following themes will be covered:

### Workshop 1: Understanding the challenges and developing the business case

- Environmental, social and economic pressures and drivers
- Sustainable development concepts and frameworks
- Developing a critical and analytical mind

- Building the business case for sustainability
- Identifying risks and opportunities

### **Workshop 2: Catalysing change beyond the organisation**

- Systems thinking
- Sustainable production and consumption
- Design and technology policy, standards and regulations
- Finance, investment and enterprise

### **Workshop 3: Taking action: implementation and driving change**

- Sustainability as core business strategy
- Culture and governance
- Embedding and integration
- Resourcing and skills development
- Influencing and communication
- Leadership and ethics

### **Programme Requirements**

Candidates are screened and accepted on the basis that they have:

- Possession of an undergraduate degree from a recognised university, or evidence of equivalent work experience/achievement and ability to read for a Master's-level programme;
- An acceptable ability in written and spoken English language (evidence will be required of participants' proficiency if English is not their first language);
- A minimum of 3 years' work experience after graduation;
- An endorsement from their employing institution supporting their application and required time commitment for the programme, or – if independent – from an acceptable institution familiar with their work;
- Interest in and commitment to sustainability;
- Academic and/or professional excellence;
- Commitment to using learning from the programme to lead or influence change within their business context;
- Access to appropriate computer technology and internet software;
- Ability to pay the course fees or 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.

### **Managing Teaching Quality and Standards**

Cambridge Institute of 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 CISL's high delivery standards. This includes regular Tutor meetings, 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, CISL 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.

CISL follows University good practice in all areas of assessment:

- i) *Detailed marking criteria*  
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 Virtual Learning Environment) 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. CISL has clear guidelines for assessors over what further action is required where marking discrepancies arise. If the discrepancy is 9% or less, an average of the two marks is awarded. If the discrepancy is more than 9%, the two assessors confer and see if the discrepancy can be reduced to within the acceptable range. If this isn't possible, third marking is instituted and the average of all three marks is awarded.
- iii) *Example papers*  
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*  
CISL 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*

CISL 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. Where discrepancy in the marks exists, assessors may confer to seek to reach agreement (see point ii above).

## **Student Support**

Participants are provided with significant support, including:

- participant handbook and guidelines;
- an online Virtual Learning Environment;
- a dedicated Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership team to handle enquiries and deal with any issues that may arise;
- 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 6,500 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 feedback

### *Participant Feedback*

Comprehensive feedback on all parts of the programme is collected at regular stages throughout the course (at least after every residential workshop). This asks for both quantitative and qualitative feedback on contributors, tutors, course materials and practical administration. Participant evaluation of the programme is carefully reviewed and used to inform future programme content, design, delivery and support.

### *Examiner Feedback*

Feedback on the standard of the appropriateness of the course for Master's level is requested from the panel of Examiners. This panel includes: an Internal University of Cambridge examiner, a University of Cambridge Moderator and an External Examiner. The External Examiner is responsible for ensuring the standard of the course compared to similar courses

run at other Higher Education Institutions.

The following comments are extracted from recent examination process:

*Overall, the work is of a high and at times outstanding standard that is fully commensurate with the level of a Postgraduate Certificate. My impression is that the programme generally does an excellent good job in terms of finding the right balance between academic and practitioner-related expectations – which is a key challenge for programmes of this type. Students of this cohort clearly managed to bring in their personal strengths and experiences and completed their work to a generally high standard.*

*The methods and standards of assessment were fully appropriate, and the assignments clearly met the learning outcomes for the programme. The choice of assignment subjects showed a very nice diversity; I was impressed by the wide range of topics, covering the entire breadth of sustainability. The analysis paper and the strategy piece form a nice sequence that is again very much in line with the learning objectives of the programme. In addition, both assignments allow students to make the link between their professional experiences and academic literature in ways that are relevant for their own professional contexts.*

(Extracted from External Examiner Report, Cohort 16, 2014)

*The Participant Handbook provides useful information to guide the students through their experience on the course. This information is clearly set out and logically arranged. Some useful guidance is given about specific aspects, for example the outline plan guidance for the Analysis and Strategy Papers are particularly helpful and force students to think about the structure and value of their work in advance of producing their essays for submission. This structured direction and subsequent Tutor review is appropriate for a part time course.*

(Extracted from the Internal Examiner Report, Cohort 16, 2014)

## **Graduate Employability and Career Destinations**

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.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this programme specification. At the time of publication, the programme specification has been approved by the relevant Faculty Board (or equivalent). Programme specifications are reviewed annually, however, during the course of the academical year, any approved changes to the programme will be communicated to enrolled students through email notification or publication in the Reporter. The relevant faculty or department will endeavour to update the programme specification accordingly, and prior to the start of the next academical year.

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](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/camdata/archive.html)