

## Programme Specifications

### POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN SUSTAINABLE VALUE CHAINS

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

The Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Value Chains (PCSV) is a nine-month, part-time master's-level programme. This programme 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 value chain 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**

The aim of PCSVC is to help organisations address the following challenges, and to identify the strategic opportunities for sustainable practice:

- Provide insights into academic knowledge in areas of relevance to sustainability in value chains;
- Develop ability to undertake sound, applied research in sustainability using a relevant research methodology, and to write up the findings convincingly;
- Demonstrate interdisciplinary approaches to solving complex problems in relation to value chains;
- Give students the skills and confidence to be able competently to follow and contribute to academic and practitioner debates;

- 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 roles;
- Expose leaders and future leaders to a range of best-practice cases of how business, government and civil society are responding to sustainability challenges and opportunities associated with value chains;
- Help leaders to make a compelling 'business case' for sustainability in their sector and/or institutional context, and understand how best to put sustainability principles 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 sustainable value chain 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 sustainable value chain 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 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. Only one resubmission is allowed on the programme.

## Programme Structure

1. A three week preparatory phase, involving pre-reading and identification of a sustainability challenge within participants' organisational contexts;
2. Two 3.5 day workshops, 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 opportunities and the business case for responding

- Systems, pressures and trends
- Sustainability risks and opportunities
- Understanding value chains
- Business case for sustainable value chains

- Critique of existing tools and techniques
- Taking a systems approach
- Leadership for sustainability

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

- Sustainable value creation
- Business model innovation
- Internal engagement and influence
- External engagement, communication and partnerships
- Sustainable consumption and influencing the consumer
- Leadership for sustainability

Cross Cutting themes explored within the Programme include:

- Organisational change
- Systems thinking
- Futures thinking
- Cooperation and partnerships
- Leadership

## **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 relation to all aspects of value chains, including procurement, production, product development, and sales and marketing. It will increase their personal development in the field.

Personnel involved in the following business functions will find the course appropriate:

- Procurement
- Production/ Operations
- Research and development
- Finance
- Business resilience/ risk management
- Business strategy
- Sustainability, including reporting
- Sales and marketing
- Communications and branding
- Policies, standards and certification
- Human resources

Individuals based in the public sector or NGOs who are working with business in the area of value chains will also benefit from attending the programme.

Applicants from outside the UK are welcomed. The web-based VLE assists geographically remote participants to participate fully in group projects and other activities.

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 of 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 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, 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 the 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 PCSVC, 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.

### *Examiners' 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 programme is challenging academically and relevant practically. There is clear application of theory to practice and the emphasis on that is clear through the course design as well as the language of feedback being used by the assessors. The programme appears well resourced in terms of attention to the students' learning and rigour in their assessment.*

PCSVL External Examiner, May 2015

## 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 PCSVL programme therefore increases candidates' general employability.

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 academic 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 academic 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)