

Programme Specifications

MASTER OF STUDIES IN SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP

1	Awarding body	University of Cambridge
2	Teaching institution	Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership
3	Accreditation details	Master of Studies
4	Name of final award	Master of Studies
5	Programme title	MSt in Sustainability Leadership
6	JACS code(s)	N190
7	Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	None
8	Qualifications framework level	7 (Masters)

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.

The MSt in Sustainability Leadership is offered by CISL in association with the Departments of Architecture, Engineering, Geography, Land Economy and the Judge Business School.

CISL also offer Postgraduate Certificates in Sustainable Business and Sustainable Value Chains and a Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business.

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

By the end of the programme, successful participants should be able to/ have:

General knowledge, understanding and awareness:

- Articulate the evolution of the sustainability debate and the conceptual frameworks that underpin it.
- A broad knowledge of the key sustainability challenges.
- Obtained multi-disciplinary perspectives on sustainability.
- A clear understanding of the 'business case' arguments for sustainability, and their limitations.

Leadership and Change

- Understand a range of theories of organisational change and analyse their own organisation's approach to change.
- Gained knowledge on the different theories, types, actors and levels of change and to be able to apply these to a sustainability context.
- Embodied the characteristics of a change agent for sustainability, especially the ability to identify, package and 'sell' sustainability-related ideas.
- Developed the ability to communicate sustainability-related messages effectively to non-sustainability target audiences.

Critical evaluation and analysis:

- The ability to be reflective and reflexive regarding sustainability worldviews or paradigms and the assumptions that shape those views.
- Understand and interpret academic and practitioner theory and apply this to an organisation.
- Engage with complexity and contradictions in the knowledge base, challenge and critically review evidence, and apply their own opinions and judgement to sustainability issues.
- Competently follow and contribute to academic and practitioner debates on sustainability issues.

Engagement and collaboration:

- Work collaboratively across subject disciplines, institutional sectors and functional silos in order to advance sustainability goals.
- Work effectively in a group and to learn from this experience.

Innovative, creative and strategic response:

- Develop an appreciation for a variety of leadership responses to sustainability, including policy development, international agreements, partnerships, advocacy, etc.
- Apply learning from best-practice cases of how business, government and civil society are responding to complex sustainability challenges.
- Frame and develop business strategies that address sustainability challenge(s).

Academic Research:

- An appreciation of research methods and associated research skills.
- Access leading-edge insights and research on sustainability from leading Cambridge academics and other thought-leaders.
- Demonstrated the ability to undertake sound sustainability-relevant research using an appropriate research methodology.
- Write reports in an academic style.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary approaches to teaching and learning are:

- Taught sessions by academics and practitioners, who are thought-leaders and/or case study illustrators.
- 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 CISL-led team of faculty, tutors and supervisors from within the University.
- Intensive and collaborative E-learning programmes, including E-modules, on-line webinars and content-based discussions to maximise knowledge sharing.

Assessment Methods

Students will complete:

- a) Three written assignments: an Analysis Paper of 3,000 words, a Strategic Action Plan of 3,000 words, and a Group Project of 5,000-7,000 words.
- b) A 15,000 word (including notes and appendices) Dissertation on a topic proposed by the candidate and approved by the Degree Committee.

Award

The Examiners may recommend that the Degree Committee recommends the Institute of Sustainability Leadership Management Board award a Postgraduate Certificate to candidates who have satisfactorily completed the requirements specified above (point a) and who do not complete, or fail to reach the required standard, in the thesis.

Programme Structure

ACADEMIC YEAR 1

July – August

Work Away from Cambridge

- *Complete Pre-programme Questionnaire and other preparatory tasks (not assessed)*
- Work through Prescribed Materials for Workshop 1

August/ September

Residential Workshop 1 (6 days in Cambridge)

- Module 1: Introduction to Sustainability Challenges
- Module 2: Introduction to Leadership Responses
- Module 3: Introduction to Leadership for Change Leadership
- Tutorials for Assignments
- Introduction to Research Skills

September – March

Work Away from Cambridge

- *Complete Learning Objectives (not assessed)*
- At least two Virtual Tutorials (typically in November and February)
- *Submit Analysis Paper Plan (not assessed)*
- *Submit Group Project Plan (not assessed)*
- *Submit Final Analysis Paper Report (assessed)*
- Three-weekly E-learning programmes with webinars and online discussions relating to thematic content for Workshop 2

March/ April

Residential Workshop 2 (6 days in Cambridge)

- Module 4-6: Three thematically-focused Modules (see list, below)
- Tutorial for Group Project
- Research Seminars / Research Support sessions

April – August

Work Away from Cambridge

- *Submit Final Strategy Paper*
- *Submit Dissertation Proposal Form with final title (not assessed)*
- Research Skills E-learning Module

- *Submission Final Group Project Report (assessed)*
- *Complete 1st Year Learning Outcomes (not assessed)*
- At least one Virtual Dissertation Supervision
- Three-weekly E-learning programmes with webinars and online discussions relating to thematic content for Workshop 3

ACADEMIC YEAR 2

August/ September

Residential Workshop 3 (6 days in Cambridge)

- Module 7-9: Three thematically-focused Modules (see list, below)
- Dissertation Supervision / Research Support sessions

September – March

Work Away from Cambridge

- Leadership for Sustainability E-learning Module
- At least two Virtual Dissertation Supervisions
- Three-weekly E-learning programmes with webinars and online discussions relating to thematic content for Workshop 4

March/ April

Residential Workshop 4 (6 days in Cambridge)

- Module 10-12: Three thematically-focused modules (see list, below)
- *Dissertation Oral Presentation (assessed)*
- Dissertation Supervision / Research Support sessions

April – November

Work Away from Cambridge

- Philanthropy E-learning Module
- At least two Virtual Dissertation Supervision
- *Complete 2nd Year Learning Outcomes (not assessed)*
- *Submit Dissertation*
- Dissertation Assessment
- Final Examinations and Recommendation for Award of Degree
- Degree Ceremony

Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business PCSB alumni since 2008 are exempted from the first workshop and the three assignments. This part of the MSt is equivalent to the PCSB. (The PCSB and MSt are currently run as two separate programmes and candidates for the MSt cannot be award the PCSB by completing only the first part of the MSt.)

List of Thematically-Focused Modules

Three of the following thematically-focused Modules are delivered at each of Workshops 2-4:

- Sustainable Design & Technology
- Sustainable Enterprise, Finance & Investment
- Sustainable Production & Consumption
- Government Policy & Regulations
- International Agreements & Institutions
- Organisational Strategy, Culture & Governance
- Operational & Employment Practices
- Communications, Education & Advocacy
- Cooperation, Collaboration & Partnerships

The order in which they are presented at the workshops varies from cohort to cohort depending on scheduling.

Standard Programme Admission Requirements

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

1. At least a 2.i honours degree from a UK University or an equivalent standard from an overseas institution;
2. A minimum of three years' work experience;
3. Demonstrable enthusiasm and/or aptitude for sustainability leadership;
4. Good ability in written and spoken English language. Please refer to the guidance on the supporting documents required for applications for details;
5. Endorsement from your employer or, if independent, from an organisation that will be the focus of your work on the programme;
6. Access to appropriate computer technology and internet software; and
7. The ability to pay the course fees or to identify a sponsoring institution.

Exceptional applicants who do not meet the standard admission criteria of a 2.i honours degree will be assessed on an individual basis and may be required to provide further materials in support of their application.

Admissions for the MSt are processed through the Judge Business School Degree Committee and the Institute for Continuing Education Academic Operations Committee. The initial recommendation for admission to the programme is made by the Programme Director and the CISL Director. The selection process is verified by the programme's Academic Advisory Committee.

Successful completion of the Programme requires that candidates:

1. Attend all the Residential Workshops.
2. Participate fully in the Workshops and Group Project.
3. Participate fully in the E-learning Modules and programme, and Virtual Tutorials and Supervisions
4. Submit and pass the three Assignments. (One failed assignment may be resubmitted.)
5. Submit and pass the research Dissertation.

Design Principles

The MSt has been guided in its development by the following principles:

- *Understanding global challenges* – including the development of systems thinking around economic, social and environmental 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 and finance.
- *Focusing on leadership* – including what is required of senior leaders from business, government and civil society to understand and effectively respond to sustainability challenges.
- *Encouraging an interdisciplinary approach* – drawing on the depth of knowledge and experience from across the university and CISL's external network.

- *Promoting an international agenda* – through the issues covered and the participants' profile, the programme aims to focus on developed and developing country contexts, at both a national and global level.
- *Balancing academia and practice* – by using the world-class academic resources of the 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, online-learning, individual and group assignments, and a research dissertation.

Managing Teaching Quality and Standards

CISL 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 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, CISL uses the assessment practices recommended by the University; specifically, this includes:

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

The Programme Director of the MSt is advised by an Academic Advisory Group, which comprises representatives from the five associated departments.

Student Support

- Students receive briefing materials and a programme handbook ahead of the first workshop.
- Programme materials and supplementary materials are all available electronically on the programme specific Virtual Learning Environment.
- Students are assigned to project groups for the duration of the first year of the Programme, which provide a tutor and peer support network
- Students have personal access to the Programme Director and Programme contributors
- The residential workshops include sessions on research methodology, to help students prepare for their dissertations
- The residential workshops include visits to the University Library and Departmental Libraries to help students to prepare for their dissertations
- Regular (2-3 weekly) online discussions are held between residential workshops
- Each student will be allocated a Director of Studies and an academic Supervisor during the dissertation phase (2nd year).

Indicators of Quality

CISL programmes all have 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

“The quality of the work, notably the first year assignments, has improved since I was examining the Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business. Hence the Programme Director, Manager and teaching staff should be congratulated for working hard to ensure that the output quality is improving over time.

..., I thought that the dissertations that I saw demonstrated that the candidates were engaging more with scholarly understanding in their second year, indicative of progression. The supervisors would also appear to be helping the candidates situate their work. The empirical “depth” of several dissertations that I read could have been better.

The *Participant Handbook* is of a very high standard, providing candidates with detailed instructions about the course, its requirements and the assignments. I believe that other M-level courses could learn much from this example of best practice.”

(External Examiner Report 2012)

Graduate Employability and Career Destinations

As the MSt is a part-time degree, the participants will mostly be in employment and will use the programme to improve their career prospects. The programme 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.

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