

Programme Specification 2016-17

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN SUSTAINABLE VALUE CHAINS

1	Awarding body	University of Cambridge
2	Teaching institution	Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership
3	Accreditation details	N/A
4	Name of final award	Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Value Chains
5	Programme title	Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Value Chains
6	JACS code(s)	N190
7	Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	None
8	Qualifications framework level	FHEQ Level 7
9	Date specification produced	May 2016

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

Understanding and awareness

- 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.
- Understand the systemic failings that drive unsustainable behaviour 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 sustainable value chain 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

Programme Structure

In recognition of the practical challenges of participants undertaking study whilst holding down a full-time job, the programme does not require prolonged periods away from the workplace. Besides the short residential workshops, the core of the programme is an individual piece of work-related research and the development of a strategic action plan that is relevant to the participant's organisation.

A group project helps to ensure that as much inter-organisational learning takes place as possible. An online Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) facilitates communication and collaboration between the short, intensive workshops.

The course runs for nine months and encompasses the following key elements:

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);
5. Support and facilitation from a team of programme tutors;
6. Informal and formal collaboration with fellow participants via email, teleconferences, face-to-face meetings, and the VLE.

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

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

Since participants come from a wide range of functions, sectors, and locations, peer learning is a key feature of the programme. Sharing experiences and insights can help to build a deeper understanding of how the business world can respond to the challenges of sustainability.

Assessment

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

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.

Entry 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.

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 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.

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).

Graduate Employability and Career Destinations

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;

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 PCSVC programme therefore increases candidates' general employability.

The Careers Service maintains links with employers and takes their needs and opinions into account in the services which it provides for students. The Careers Service also allocates a Careers Adviser to each College, faculty and department to act as a point of contact.

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