

## Programme Specification 2017-18

### POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

1	<b>Awarding body</b>	University of Cambridge
2	<b>Teaching institution</b>	Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership
3	<b>Accreditation details</b>	N/A
4	<b>Name of final award</b>	Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business
5	<b>Programme title</b>	Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business
6	<b>JACS code(s)</b>	N190
7	<b>Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)</b>	None
8	<b>Qualifications framework level</b>	FHEQ Level 7
9	<b>Date specification produced</b>	July 2017

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 19 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

The Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business aims to equip business professionals with:

- a robust knowledge of global social, environmental and economic trends, and the ability to develop the strategic business case for organisational change;
- an understanding of the ways in which business can catalyse system-level change; and
- the critical skills and confidence to embed sustainability thinking into business action at an organisational level to achieve practical outcomes.

## **Learning Outcomes of the Programme**

By the end of the programme, successful participants should have enhanced their ability in the following areas:

### ***Understanding and awareness***

- Have a broad understanding of the global social, environmental, economic and ethical "system pressures" affecting business, government and civil society.
- Familiar with the evolution of the sustainability debate and the conceptual frameworks that underpin it.
- Develop a multidisciplinary perspective on sustainability, with insights from departments across the University, and understand the contribution of these fields in addressing sustainability challenges and opportunities
- Understand the systemic failings that drive unsustainability in our current economic system, and recognise the paradigm shifts necessary to achieve a sustainable economy.
- Identify relevant aspects of the broader social, economic, political, technological and legislative environment, and potential levers for wider system impact.
- Have a clear understanding of the major arguments advanced in the "business case" for sustainable business, as well as the research and limitations surrounding these claims.
- Understand a range of theories of, and potential levers for, organisational change and embedding sustainability.

### ***Skills***

- Understand, interpret and critically analyse academic and practitioner theory and apply to a business context.
- Engage with complexity and contradictions in the knowledge base.
- Show the ability to be reflective and reflexive with regard to sustainability world views or paradigms and the assumptions that shape those views.
- Able to write in a clear, concise, coherent and academically rigorous way.
- Respond innovatively and creatively to emerging social and economic trends that pose risks or opportunities for an organisation.
- Develop the ability to communicate sustainability-related messages effectively to non-sustainability target audiences.
- Embody the characteristics of a change agent for sustainability, including listening, building coalitions, identifying key leverage points, influencing/inspiring others, and resilience.
- Understand own personal leadership motivations and values, and how these align with wider business needs and drivers.
- Develop business strategies and practical action plans that address one or more of the identified sustainability challenges and opportunities.
- Able to work effectively in a group setting (in situ and remotely) and to show the ability to learn from this experience.

## **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 4 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).
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 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

### **Teaching methods**

The primary approaches to teaching and learning are:

- taught plenary and small group sessions by academics and practitioners, who are thought-leaders and/or case study contributors;
- group work, involving dialogue, debate and presentations throughout the taught modules, as well as a group research assignment;
- experiential techniques including role plays, simulations, debates and field trips;
- individual work, involving structured reading and reflection, 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;
- and an E-learning component, including an online module, and structured reading and preparation.

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

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Length (words)</b>	<b>Contribution to final grade</b>
<b>Analysis Paper</b>	3000	33%
<b>Strategic Action Plan</b>	3000	33%
<b>Group Project</b>	7000	33% including a % 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. One only resubmission opportunity is allowed.

## Entry Requirements

Prospective participants must be able to demonstrate:

- 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 (evidence will be required of participants' proficiency if English is not their first language);
- a minimum of three 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; and
- the ability to pay the course fees or identify a sponsoring institution.

In exceptional circumstances applicants who do not meet the academic entry requirement can be offered a place when it is clear that their professional experience and knowledge outweighs the fact that they do not have the appropriate degree required for entry.

## Managing Teaching Quality and Standards

Cambridge Institute or 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.

## **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 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;

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.

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