

Programme Specification 2020-21

MASTER OF STUDIES IN SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP

Awarding body	University of Cambridge
Teaching institution	Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership
Accreditation details	Master of Studies
Name of final award	Master of Studies
Programme title	MSt in Sustainability Leadership
HECoS code(s)	100469 (environmental management) 100088 (leadership)
Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	None
Qualifications framework level	7 (Masters)
Date specification produced	August 2021

The University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL), an institute within the School of Technology, has run executive development programmes in sustainability for 20 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 8,000 senior leaders from business, government and civil society.

The MSt in Sustainability Leadership is offered by CISL, drawing on academic expertise from, among others, the Departments of Engineering, Geography, Land Economy and the Cambridge Judge Business School.

CISL also offer Postgraduate Certificates in Sustainable Business (with an organisational or value chains focus) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business.

Aims of the Programme

Through a combination of interdisciplinary insights, academic analysis, practical business application, peer-learning and personal reflection, the programme aims to develop a community of leaders who have:

- a wide awareness and deep understanding of the social, environmental, ethical and economic challenges and opportunities facing the world;
- the vision and ambition to drive business leadership to achieve real systems change;
- the knowledge, experience and ability to critically evaluate a range of strategic levers for change; and
- the leadership capacity and confidence at a personal and organisational level to best use these levers to effect transformation.

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 and deep understanding of the global social, environmental, economic and "system pressures" affecting business, government and civil society.
- Articulate the evolution of the sustainability debate and the conceptual frameworks that underpin it.
- Develop a multidisciplinary perspective on sustainability.
- Understand the systemic failings of 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.

Leadership and Change

- Understand their own personal leadership motivations, values and agency, and how these align with wider business needs and drivers.
- Understand a range of theories of, and potential levers for, change and embedding sustainability across and organization/value chain and identify different organisation's approach to change.
- Develop the ability to communicate sustainability-related messages effectively to a variety of audiences.
- Develop the characteristics of a change agent for sustainability, including listening, building coalitions, identifying key leverage points, influencing and inspiring others, and resilience.

Critical evaluation and analysis

- Able 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 organization/value chain.
- Engage with complexity and contradictions in the knowledge base, challenge and critically review evidence, and apply their own opinions and judgement to sustainability issues.

Engagement and collaboration

- Engage with actors across subject disciplines, institutional sectors and functional silos in order to advance sustainability goals.
- Work effectively in a collaborative group setting (in situ and remotely) and to show the ability 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.
- Develop practical action plans for an organisational/value chain context that address sustainability challenges and opportunities.
- Respond innovatively and creatively to emerging social and economic trends that pose risks/opportunities for an organization/value chain.

Academic research

- Develop an understanding of research methods and associated research skills.
- Able to locate and access leading-edge insights and research on sustainability.
- Able to undertake sound sustainability-relevant research.
- Able to write in a clear, concise, coherent and academically rigorous way.

Teaching and Learning 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
- a collaborative E-learning programme, including three online modules, 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 (33.3% of the overall MSt result).
- b) A 15,000 word (including notes and appendices) Dissertation and presentation on a topic proposed by the candidate and approved by the Degree Committee (66.7% of the overall MSt result).

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.

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.

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.

Programme Structure

ACADEMIC YEAR 1

- Module 1: Introduction to Sustainability Concepts, Trends and Pressures
- Module 2: Introduction to The Business Case for Action
- Module 3: Leadership for Sustainability
- Module 4-6: Three thematically-focused Modules (see list, below)
- Three-weekly E-learning activities
- Research Skills E-Learning Module

- At least two Virtual Tutorials
- Tutorial for Group Project
- Research Seminars / Research Support sessions
- Submit Dissertation Proposal Form with final title (not assessed)
- At least one Virtual Dissertation Supervision

ACADEMIC YEAR 2

- Module 7-12: Six thematically-focused Modules (see list, below)
- Leadership for Sustainability E-learning Module
- Philanthropy E-learning Module
- Three-weekly E-learning activities
- Two face to face dissertation supervisions, three virtual dissertation supervisions
- *Submit Dissertation*

List of Thematically-Focused Modules:

- Employment & Operational Practices
- Cooperation, Collaboration & Partnerships
- Sustainable Production & Consumption
- Sustainable Design & Technology
- Government Policy & Regulations
- Sustainable Finance & Investment
- Business Models, Strategy & Corporate Governance
- International Governance
- Communication, Advocacy & Education

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 after graduation;
3. demonstrable enthusiasm and/or aptitude for sustainability leadership;
4. good ability in written and spoken English;
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.

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.

The Programme Director of the MSt is advised by a Teaching Committee, which comprises representatives from associated departments, student representatives and CISL directorship.

Student Support

- Students receive briefing materials and a participant 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 skills, to help students prepare for their dissertations
- The residential workshops include visits and inductions to the University Library resources 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 for the duration of the programme, and an academic Supervisor during the dissertation phase (2nd year).

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. 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: <https://www.camdata.admin.cam.ac.uk/>