

Programme Specification 2021-22

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Awarding body	University of Cambridge
Teaching institution	Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership
Accreditation details	N/A
Name of final award	Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business
Programme title	Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business
HECoS code(s)	100079 (business studies)
Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	None
Qualifications framework level	FHEQ Level 7
Date specification produced	June 2022

The University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL), an institute within the School of Technology, has run executive development programmes in sustainability for 30 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 16,000 senior leaders from business, government and civil society.

CISL also offer a Master of Studies in Sustainability Leadership 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 over 20 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/ embedding sustainability across value chains
- knowledge of how to develop the strategic business case for organisational change/embedding sustainability across value chains;
- the critical skills and confidence to embed sustainability into business action at an organisational or value chains level how to lead organizational change
- new approaches, tools and techniques for developing resilient and sustainable value chains (value chains stream only)
- how to influence and engage customers, to shape the market connect and embed sustainability across value chains (value chains stream only).

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

- A broad and deep understanding of the global social, environmental, economic and "system pressures" affecting business, government and civil society.
- Able to articulate the evolution of the sustainability debate and the conceptual frameworks that underpin it.
- 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.
- Able to identify relevant aspects of the broader social, economic, political, technological and legislative environment, and potential levers for wider system impact.
- 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 own personal leadership motivations and values, and how these align with wider business needs and drivers.
- Able to communicate sustainability-related messages effectively to a variety of target audiences.
- Develop the characteristics of a change agent for sustainability, including listening, building coalitions, identifying key leverage points, influencing/inspiring others, and resilience.
- Understand a range of theories of, and potential levers for, change and embedding sustainability across an organisation and identifying different organisations' approaches to change.

Critical evaluation and analysis

- Able to be reflective and reflexive with regard to sustainability worldviews or paradigms and the assumptions that shape those views.
- Understand and interpret academic and practitioner theory/insights and apply to an organisation.
- Able to engage with complexity and contradictions in the knowledge base, challenge and critically review evidence, and apply own opinions and judgement to sustainability issues.

Engagement and Collaboration

- Able to engage with actors across subject disciplines, institutional sectors and functional silos in order to advance sustainability goals.
- Able to work effectively in a group setting (in situ and remotely) and to show the ability to learn from this experience.

Innovative, creative and strategic responses

- An appreciation for a variety of leadership responses to sustainability, including policy development, international agreements, partnerships, advocacy, etc.
- Able to extract and apply learning from case studies of how business, government and civil society are responding to complex sustainability challenges.
- Able to develop practical action plans for an organisational context that address sustainability challenges and/or opportunities.
- Able to respond innovatively and creatively to emerging social and economic trends that pose risks or opportunities for an organisation.

Academic research

- 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/present in a clear, concise, coherent and academically rigorous way.

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/opportunity 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/opportunity: 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:

		Organisational stream	Value Chains stream
Workshop 1	Understanding the global challenges and opportunities, and what needs to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental, social and economic pressures and drivers • Sustainability concepts and frameworks • Systems thinking • Sustainability risks and opportunities • A sustainable economy • The business response to sustainability • Leadership for sustainability • Developing a critical and analytical mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental, social and economic pressures and drivers • Sustainability concepts and frameworks • Systems thinking • Building the business case for sustainable value chains • Leadership for sustainability • Developing a critical and analytical mind
Workshop 2	Catalysing change in and beyond the organisation/across the value chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning for action • Levers for system level change • Communication and influence • Leadership for change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships and collaboration • Business model innovation • Leveraging change across the value chain • Communication and influence • Leadership for change

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

Assignment	Length (words)	Contribution to final grade
Analysis Paper	3000	33%
Strategic Action Plan	3000	33%
Group Project	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 individual 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. At the discretion of Examiners, a fail at Grade D in the group project or a borderline (59%) fail in an individual assignments can be compensated by a high level of competence in the other assessed work:

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, required time commitment for the programme and ideally support for the assignments being undertaken in the context of a sustainability challenge/opportunity relevant to the organisation, 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;
- Ability to attend both workshops.

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 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 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:

- course handbook and guidelines;
- an online Virtual Learning Environment;
- a dedicated Cambridge Institute of 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 over 16,000 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 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: <https://www.camdata.admin.cam.ac.uk/>