

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION 2021-22

### POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

<b>Awarding body</b>	University of Cambridge
<b>Teaching institution</b>	Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership
<b>Accreditation details</b>	Postgraduate Diploma
<b>Name of final award</b>	Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business (120 CAT points)
<b>Programme title</b>	Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business
<b>UCAS code</b>	N/A
<b>HECoS code(s)</b>	100079 (business studies)
<b>Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)</b>	None
<b>Qualifications framework level</b>	7 (Masters)
<b>Date specification produced</b>	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 over 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.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business (PG Dip) is a Master's-level graduate programme. It is a flexible, practically-applied option for continued professional development, exploring innovations in sustainable business. It is equivalent to two-thirds of a Master's, and is delivered by the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL).

Students can take from 18 months to three years to complete this course. Stage 1 comprises one of the Postgraduate Certificates in Sustainable Business, and Stage 2 provides participants with the opportunity to take a 'deep dive' into emergent innovations and levers for change in a business context. Learning is highly collaborative and practical, underpinned by academic rigour.

The Diploma is designed for senior and mid-career managers from around the world with at least three years' work experience. The programme attracts those pursuing a flexible and practical approach to exploring sustainability leadership, with practical assignments rather than a research dissertation. Applicants are drawn from a range of industrial sectors, as well as those from a not-for-profit or public sector background.

#### Aims of the Programme

The Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business aims to provide an academically grounded, highly participatory and applied forum for learning around topical sustainability issues, to help professionals develop:

- a strong foundation in wider global social, environmental and economic trends, and the strategic business case for change
- the knowledge, skills and confidence to critically engage with a range of strategies and tools for practical action

- an on-going capacity to work with others to co-create solutions to complex problems, and contribute to a wider community of learning and practice

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of Stage 1 of the course (one of the Postgraduate Certificates in Sustainable Business), 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 world views 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.
- 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.

By the end of Stage 2, participants will have further developed in the above areas, and should have enhanced their ability in the following areas:

- Develop understanding and application of tools and techniques based around co-creating solutions, collaboration, innovation and design;
- Contribute to professional debate about sustainability issues with colleagues from other job functions;
- Engage and challenge sustainability 'tools' analysing their suitability to address their own organisational challenges;
- Hone leadership skills in order to effectively respond to organisational/ sectoral sustainability challenges.

### **Programme Structure**

The Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business (PGDip) is designed to enable students who have completed a CISL Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert) to continue their learning and development with the Institute<sup>1</sup>. The PGDip offers an alternative to the Master of Studies in Sustainability Leadership (MSt) as an avenue for professional development. It builds on the teaching of PG Certs and will extend participants' knowledge and understanding of key topical sustainability themes and cutting edge responses.

Individuals who have not completed one of the PG Certs can apply directly for the PG Dip. Once accepted on to the PG Dip they must complete one of the CISL PG Certs. The PG Cert counts as Stage 1 of the PG Dip. Having passed Stage 1 they progress on to Stage 2 of the Diploma.

Having completed one of the PG Certs as Stage 1 of the PG Dip, students have three years in which to complete Stage 2 of the course. As the students' progress through the programme, they:

- Attend three workshops in Cambridge.

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<sup>1</sup> Alumni of PCSB and PCSVC who have completed the course since 2008 are eligible for immediate entry on to the PGDip. Alumni prior to 2008 and Alumni of the now defunct Postgraduate Certificate Cross Sector Partnerships are not currently eligible for entry to the PGDip. This is due to the fact that the course they completed did not meet the accreditation standard required for Postgraduate study at a Master's level and therefore they do not have the 60 credits required to enter the PGDip.

- Complete a series of assessed assignments and formative assignments.
- Complete online learning including two E-modules and webinars.

## **Teaching and Learning Methods**

For Stage1, 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
- E-learning programme, including an online module, structured reading/preparation, and informal discussion.

For Stage 2, the same approaches are used, with a stronger emphasis on:

- co-creating solutions in a collaborative working environment
- students leading from the Lab content, reflecting the nature of the programme and the seniority/experience of participants.

## **Assessment**

Students undertake a number of assessed and non-assessed assignments. They are supported by assigned experts (Tutors or Supervisors) to support the completion of the assignments. Assignments are marked by a group of experienced CISL Faculty.

The assignments are designed to ensure integration of the student's learning with their workplace context.

### **Stage 1**

During Stage 1 of the PG Dip students choose to complete one of CISL's Postgraduate Certificates. Information about the assessments can be found in the programme specification for the Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business.

### **Stage 2**

#### **Assessed assignments**

- A 4000 word Analytical Case Study, which focuses on sustainability leadership practices generally in their own organisation. A short presentation is also required in relation to this piece of work.
- A 2500 word Thought Leadership Essay on a topic relevant to sustainability leadership in a business context and drawing on academic and practitioner literature. A short 500 word summary article is also required for this element of assessed work.
- Designing, hosting and delivering a webinar on sustainability leadership.

## **Non-assessed assignments**

The following are non-assessed but, nevertheless, required:

- Work through preparatory materials in advance of the residential workshops.
- Participate in a set number of webinars and oral presentations hosted by their peers, interactive virtual teaching sessions by programme contributors
- Complete two E-modules on the topic of Academic Writing and Leadership for Sustainability.. These combines lessons, tasks, student-led discussions and written exercises.
- Attend three virtual introduction to assignment events.

## **Entry Requirements**

Acceptance on to the programme relies upon:

- Having completed the Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business (or the Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Value Chains) since 2008.
- Or applying to the PG Dip and successfully completing Stage 1 (ie one of the PG Certs).
- Access to appropriate computer technology and internet software.
- Ability to pay the course fees or identify a sponsoring institution.
- Ability to complete the PGDip within three years of enrolment.

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 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, 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;
- Ability to pay the course fees or identify a sponsoring institution;
- Ability to attend two workshops during Stage 1 and to complete Stage 2 within three years of enrolment;
- Alumni of CISL Postgraduate Certificates who wish to continue their learning and enter Stage 2 of the PG Dip must have passed all of the assignments and have been awarded the Certificate from 2008 onward;

In exceptional circumstances applicants who do not meet the academic entry requirements 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.

## **Student Support**

Participants are provided with significant support, including:

- Briefing materials and a course handbook.
- Course materials and supplementary materials available electronically on the programme-specific VLE.
- Regular communication between the Programme Team and the students via the VLE, especially between Labs when the students are undertaking their assignments.
- Regular peer interaction between students via the VLE. Students will be assigned to online learning groups, to provide a dedicated peer support network.
- Coaching and support for assignments provided by an experienced Tutor.
- Personal access to the Course Director and course contributors.
- A dedicated CISL Team to handle enquiries and deal with any issues that may arise.

### **Management of Teaching Quality and Standards**

Throughout the programme, participants are asked for their feedback on speakers, syllabus content, teaching approach, faculty, assignments and pastoral care. This feedback is reviewed carefully by the Programme Team and appropriate suggestions / feedback are acted upon.

A review meeting is held at the end of the programme which is attended by the key course contributors and the programme team. All aspects of the programme are discussed and recommendations for how the programme can be improved are recorded and where appropriate implemented for the next programme.

The Examiner's reports and Examiner's meetings are used by CISL as an indicator of quality and recommendations are incorporated into the programme.

Finally, the programme will be incorporated into the University's schedules for periodic Learning & Teaching Review.

### **Graduate Employability and Career Destinations**

As the PGDip is delivered on a part-time basis, it is anticipated that the majority of participants will be in existing employment and will use the course to improve their career prospects. The course takes an applied approach to knowledge, with both the teaching and assignments oriented towards relevance to their work situation.

Over the past 15 years there has been an increase, both nationally and internationally, in the 'green collar' jobs market. The continued growth in this area has resulted in a demand for relevant skills in a variety of sectors and organisations. Hence, this programme will appeal to CISL alumni wishing to further enhance their career prospects. Employers will support attendance at the PGDip as it provides the opportunity for attendees to enhance their knowledge in specific areas relevant to their role / organisation.

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
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(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/>