

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION 2023-24

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

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| Awarding body | University of Cambridge |
| Teaching institution | Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership |
| Accreditation details | Postgraduate Diploma |
| Name of final award | Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business (120 CAT points) |
| Programme title | Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business |
| UCAS code | N/A |
| HECoS code(s) | 100079 (business studies) |
| Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s) | None |
| Qualifications framework level | 7 (Masters) |
| Date specification produced | December 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 27,000 senior leaders from business, government and civil society.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business (PG Dip) is a 3 year part time Master's-level course, equivalent to two-thirds of a Master's.

The PG Dip is completed in two Stages. Stage 1 comprises one of the Postgraduate Certificates in Sustainable Business (PCSB), which takes 9 months. Stage 2 takes an additional 2 years to complete.

Educational aims

The Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business is part of CISL's mission to empower individuals and organisations to take leadership to tackle critical global challenges.

More specifically, it 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
- strategies and suggestions for change based on the latest theoretical and practical developments shaping sustainable practices
- 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

The table below indicates the expected learning outcomes of the programme. The learning outcomes for the Masters are included to show progression between CISL's portfolio of

qualifications.

| | Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business | | Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business | | Master of Studies in Sustainability Leadership | |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| <i>1. The changing global context, the case for a radical shift from current systems and structures, and the role of business</i> | | | | | | |
| LO1A | Understand... | + | Analyse... | + | Evaluate structural dimensions of... | ...global economic, environmental, and social pressures and trends from a multi-disciplinary and systems perspective |
| LO1B | Articulate... | + | Analyse... | + | Evaluate and establish... | ...the need for a radical shift from current systems and structures to address complex systems-related problems and opportunities |
| LO1C | Understand... | + | Analyse... | + | Assess and generate... | ...the case for business leading systemic change |
| <i>2. A sustainable future, and the potential synergies, tensions in achieving it</i> | | | | | | |
| LO2A | Understand... | + | Analyse... | + | Assess... | ... conceptualisations of sustainability and key dimensions of a sustainable future, such as regeneration, inclusion, net zero carbon and resilience |
| LO2B | Identify... | + | Analyse... | + | Evaluate and generate responses to address... | ... synergies and tensions between dimensions of a sustainable future |
| <i>3. Potential strategies and pathways to leverage change both within and beyond organisations to achieve a sustainable future</i> | | | | | | |
| LO3A | Identify and apply... | + | Analyse and apply... | + | Evaluate and apply a broad and deep range of... | ...research and best practice on levers for change for embedding sustainability within organisations |
| LO3B | Identify and apply... | + | Analyse and apply... | + | Evaluate and apply a broad and deep range of... | ...research and best practice on levers for change beyond organisations for wider system impact |
| LO3C | Identify and apply... | + | Analyse and apply... | + | Evaluate and apply a broad and deep range of... | ...theories of change and innovation at an organisational and system level |
| | Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business | | Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business | | Master of Studies in Sustainability Leadership | |
| <i>4. Personal leadership and effective action as an agent of change</i> | | | | | | |

| | Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business | | Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Business | | Master of Studies in Sustainability Leadership | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LO4A | Identify and demonstrate... | + | Develop... | + | Assess and apply advanced concepts that enhance... | ...the thinking, values and practices that support effective personal leadership |
| LO4B | Identify and demonstrate... | + | Develop... | + | Generate impact through... | ...personal contribution to effective action as a change agent |
| <i>5. Sustainability insight, knowledge, and research for specific contexts</i> | | | | | | |
| LO5A | Identify and apply... | + | Analyse and apply... | + | Evaluate and apply a broader and deeper range of... | ...existing academic and practitioner knowledge on a range of fields and topics to address sustainability challenges and opportunities in specific contexts |
| LO5B | Generate... | + | Generate further... | + | Generate advanced... |sustainability-relevant research in an individual and group context |
| <i>6. Communication and engagement, individually and collaboratively, to advance the sustainability agenda</i> | | | | | | |
| LO6A | Create... ...entry-level academic and specific organisational contexts | + | Create... ...academic and specific organisational contexts | + | Create... ...an advanced academic level, and organisational contexts | ...clear, concise, and logically ordered written and verbal communications appropriate to ... |
| LO6B | Contribute to... | + | Contribute further to... | + | Generate... | ...effective and collaborative engagement with peers and wider networks as part of a learning community |

Programme structure

In recognition of the practical challenges of students undertaking study whilst holding down a full-time job, the programme does not require prolonged periods away from the workplace.

The course runs over 3 years and encompasses the following key elements:

1. A three-week preparatory phase, involving pre-reading and identification of a

- sustainability challenge/opportunity within students' organisational contexts
- 2. 13.5 days of workshops (Two 4-day workshops in stage 1 and three 2.5-day workshops in Stage 2) held in Cambridge, each preceded by pre-workshop reading and preparatory activities
- 3. A work-based, collaborative group research project (assessed) which runs for the duration of stage 1
- 4. Four individual written assignments (all assessed).
- 5. Support and facilitation from a team of programme tutors
- 6. Informal and formal collaboration with fellow students via email, teleconferences, face-to-face meetings, and the VLE.

Teaching and learning methods

Teaching methods on the programme span different session formats and techniques, to accommodate different learning styles. These include:

- plenary and small group sessions taught 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
- an E-learning component, including online modules, structured reading/preparation, and informal discussion.

CISL's applied, practitioner-oriented postgraduate programmes are designed to support personal and professional development. The following are key features that underpin CISL's distinctive approach to learning:

Flexible: Programmes are designed for professionals working full time; hence the intensive workshops are blended with remote working on assignments and other course-related activities.

Thought leadership: The speakers, lecturers and facilitators are leading experts and practitioners from academia, business, government and civil society.

Practical relevance: Business case studies and hearing from leading industry figures are an integral part of the taught content, and assignments are focused on organisational contexts; thereby developing skills needed to translate cutting-edge insights into practice.

Topical: The content includes developing a robust 'business case' for sustainability, a focus on sustainability leadership aims and responses, and change management, covering both established and emergent experience.

Interactive: The learning approach is highly interactive, collaborative, interdisciplinary, and designed to encourage reflection and debate.

Diversity of perspectives: Students come from a wide range of functions, sectors, and geographies; hence provide a wide spectrum of insights and opportunities to benchmark

against how other organisations are responding to sustainability.

Peer-learning: Shared learning and networking with between peers and the extensive range of contributors together provide a rich learning environment.

Support and mentorship: A dedicated CISL team and expert tutors/supervisors support the learning journey, including by providing feedback on assignments that are focused on organisational contexts.

Personal application: Students are encouraged to identify personal opportunities for leadership and engage in reflective practice throughout the programme, supported by peers and tutors.

Assessment methods

| <i>Stage</i> | <i>Assignment</i> | <i>Length (words)</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Contribution to final grade</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Analysis Paper | 3000 | The Analysis Paper is a detailed, critical analysis of a sustainability challenge or opportunity for a specific organisation, culminating in clear strategic recommendations | 16.7% |
| 1 | Strategic Action Plan | 3000 | The Strategic Action Plan builds on the Analysis Paper, developing a practical implementation plan for taking forward one or more of the recommendations, supported by a sound rationale and existing literature and cases | 16.7% |
| 1 | Group Project | 7000 | The Group Project is an original piece of research that draws upon the group's collective interest and experience, and advances knowledge on an issue relevant to sustainability, business and leadership | 16.7% including a % for personal contribution to group project |
| 2 | Analytical Case Study | 4000 | The Analytical Case Study explores in depth a phenomenon that has happened (or is happening) 'in situ' to establish what can be learnt of relevance to sustainability | 25% |
| 2 | Literature Review Essay | 3000 | The Literature Review Essay aims to identify and explore a knowledge gap or area of contention within the existing academic literature | 25% |

Assessment is based on five written assignments. Students are required to achieve a pass grade on all assignments.

Entry and/or progression requirements

Besides enthusiasm and commitment, applicants must have

- 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 applicants' 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

- Demonstrable enthusiasm and/or aptitude for sustainability leadership (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 complete three modules (inclusive of participation to residential workshops of 2.5 days each) in Stage 2.

Following successful completion of the PG Dip alumni can apply to continue to a full Masters via CISL's Master of Studies in Sustainability Leadership Flexible Route (Stage 3). This third stage takes an additional 2 years of part-time study.

Student support

Students are provided with significant support, including:

- course handbook and assignment guidelines
- an online Virtual Learning Environment
- a dedicated CISL Team to handle enquiries and deal with any issues that may arise

a Tutor or Supervisor who has primary responsibility for supporting their academic work on the programme. Tutors or Supervisors are available at and beyond workshops (via phone and email, and where necessary for face to face meetings).

Management of teaching quality and standards

The University ensures high quality of teaching and learning in the following ways:

- Scrutiny of the External Examiners Reports for all teaching programmes
- Encouraging student engagement at both the local level, through involvement in Faculty and Departmental Committees, and at a central level by participation in nationally-benchmarked surveys
- Participation in the biennial Education Monitoring and Review Process to explore provision, share good practice and suggest constructive courses of action
- Mentoring, appraisal, and peer review of staff, and encouraging staff participation in personal development programmes.

Graduate employability and career destinations

On completion of the first residential workshop, students are invited to join the CISL Network which brings together over 27,000 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.

As the PG Dip 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 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 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/>