

Programme Specification 2024-25
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	November 2023

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 30,000 senior leaders from business, government and civil society.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business (PCSB) is a nine-month, part-time master's-level programme, equivalent to one-third of a Master's. It is offered in two streams: embedding sustainability within organisations or across value chains.

Educational aims

PCSB is part of CISL's mission to empower individuals and organisations to take leadership to tackle critical global challenges.

- More specifically, through combining academic foundations with leading business insights in a collaborative and practical approach to learning, participants will learn:

Organisational Stream	Value Chains Stream
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A robust knowledge of global social, environmental and economic trends, and how business can catalyse wider system-level change. • How to develop the strategic business case for organisational change • How to embed sustainability into business action at an organisational level • How to lead organisational change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A robust knowledge of global social, environmental and economic trends and how business can catalyse wider system-level change. • How to develop the strategic business case for embedding sustainability across value chains and markets • New approaches, tools and techniques for developing resilient and sustainable value chains. • How to influence and engage customers, to shape the market context and embed sustainability across value chains.

Learning outcomes

The table below indicates the expected learning outcomes of the programme. The learning outcomes for the PG Diploma and Masters are included to show the 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 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 radical shifts in current systems to address challenges and opportunities
LO1C	Understand...	+	Analyse...	+	Assess and generate...	...the case for business leading systemic change
<i>2. A sustainable future, and the potential synergies and 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 levers, leverage points and pathways to achieve change both within and beyond organisations to achieve sustainability</i>						
LO3A	Identify and apply...	+	Analyse and apply...	+	Evaluate and apply a broad and deep range of...	...research and best practice on levers and leverage points for embedding sustainability within organisations
LO3B	Identify and apply...	+	Analyse and apply...	+	Evaluate and apply a broad and deep range of...	...research and best practices on levers and leverage points that are applied beyond organisations for wider system change
LO3C	Identify... and apply...	+	Analyse... and apply...	+	Evaluate... and apply a broad and deep range of...	...pathways ...change theories and innovations within and beyond an organisation and at a wider system level

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<i>4. Personal and collective leadership and effective action as an agent of change</i>						
LO4A	Identify and demonstrate...	+	Develop...	+	Assess and apply advanced concepts that enhance...	...the thinking, values and practices that support effective personal and collective leadership
LO4B	Identify and demonstrate...	+	Develop...	+	Generate impact through...	...personal contribution to effective action as an agent of change
<i>5. Sustainability insights, 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 insights and knowledge 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 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 students' organisational contexts.
2. Two 4-day workshops were 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 the course.
4. Two individual assignments, undertaken sequentially, 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 supervisors.
6. Informal and formal collaboration with fellow students 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 challenges and opportunities • A sustainable economy • The business response to sustainability • Leadership for sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental, social and economic pressures and drivers • Sustainability concepts and frameworks • Systems thinking • Critique of existing tools and enablers • 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 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 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 supervisors.

- an E-learning component, including an online module, and structured reading and preparation.

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 co-learning environment.

Support and mentorship: A dedicated CISL team and expert 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 supervisors.

Assessment methods

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Length (words)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contribution to final grade</i>
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	33%

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	33%
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	33% including a % for personal contribution to group project

Assessment is based on three written 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 (evidence will be required of applicants' proficiency in 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
- 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 both workshops.

Individuals who have completed PCSB (organisational or value chains stream, since 2008) can use the credit gained to apply to continue to either the PG Diploma in Sustainable Business or the MSt in Sustainability Leadership offered by CISL.

If accepted on to either of these courses, they pay a reduced fee. Those accepted on the MSt in Sustainability Leadership continuous route are exempt from the first-year assignments and the first MSt workshop.

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 supervisor who has primary responsibility for supporting their academic work on the programme. 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 30,000 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 PCSB is a part-time degree, the students 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 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/>