

Programme Specification<sup>1</sup> (Date 2026 – 27)  
Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business

Programme title	<i>Sustainable Business</i>
Name of final award	<i>Postgraduate Certificate</i>
Awarding Body	<i>University of Cambridge</i>
Teaching institution	<i>Cambridge Institute for Sustainable Business</i>
PSRB/Accreditation details and date the course was last accredited	
UCAS code	<i>None</i>
HECoS code(s)	<i>100079 (business studies)</i>
ATAS code	
Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	<i>None</i>
Qualification framework level	<i>Level 7</i>
Date specification approved	<i>December 2025</i>
Linked course	

Brief overview of the course

*(Please explain the purpose of the programme in a brief paragraph of no more than 5-6 sentences.)*

The Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business (PCSB) is a 9-month part-time master's-level programme, equivalent to one-third of a Master's degree, which is offered with a choice of thematic streams in two formats: 1) 'blended' over 9 months, with two 4-day residential workshops in Cambridge, and 2) fully online over a minimum of 12 months.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Educational Aims

*What are the educational aims of the programme?*

Participants will learn:

- 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 in organisations and value chains
- the critical skills and confidence to embed sustainability into business action
- new approaches, tools, and techniques for leading change in a specific context of interest
- how to influence and engage key stakeholders to and embed sustainability in a specific context

**Learning Outcomes** - *What is a student expected to learn from the programme? These should have been included on the new course proposal when the course was first approved.*

*(Please refer to the guidance on [Learning Aims and Outcomes](#) and the [Office for Students](#) sector-recognised standards for sector expectations of the graduates of higher education qualifications )*

Knowledge and Understanding

- Understand global economic, environmental and social pressures and trends from a multi-disciplinary and systems perspective (LO1A)
- Understand the case for business leading systemic change (LO1C)
- Understand conceptualisations of sustainability and key dimensions of a sustainable future, such as regeneration, inclusion, net zero carbon and resilience (LO2A)

Skills and other attributes

- Articulate the need for radical shifts in current systems to address challenges and opportunities (LO1B)
- Identify synergies and tensions between dimensions of a sustainable future (LO2B)
- Identify and apply research and best practice on levers and leverage points for embedding sustainability within organisations (LO3A)
- Identify and apply research and best practices on levers and leverage points that are applied beyond organisations for wider system change (LO3B)

- Identify pathways and apply change theories and innovations within and beyond an organisation and at a wider system level (LO3C)
- Identify and demonstrate the thinking, values and practices that support effective personal and collective leadership (LO4A)
- Identify and demonstrate the thinking, values and practices that support effective action as an agent of change (LO4B)
- Identify and apply existing academic and practitioner insights and knowledge to address sustainability challenges and opportunities in specific contexts (LO5A)
- Generate sustainability-relevant research in an individual and group context (LO5B)
- Create clear, concise and logically ordered written and verbal communications appropriate to entry-level academic and specific organisational contexts (LO6A)
- Contribute to effective and collaborative engagement with peers and wider networks as part of a learning community (LO6B)

### Programme structure

*Please give a brief outline of the course structure and how it supports progress. Please note details of individual papers/modules are not needed. What elements does the programme contain? If you have a part-time route show how this is aligned with the full-time course.*

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.

### Blended streams

The blended streams encompass the following key elements:

- A three-week preparatory phase, involving pre-reading and identification of a sustainability challenge/opportunity within students' organisational contexts;
- Two four-day workshops held in Cambridge, each preceded by pre-workshop reading and preparatory activities.

### Fully online streams

The fully online streams encompass the following key elements

- Self-guided asynchronous online learning for the duration of the programme;
- Facilitated synchronous online learning with one to two "live" webinars monthly;
- Discussion forums that provide the opportunity for live interaction and discussion with topic experts.

### All streams

- A work-based, collaborative group research project (assessed) which runs for the duration of the course;
- Two individual assignments, undertaken sequentially, based on the identified sustainability challenge/opportunity: an Analysis Paper and a Strategic Action Plan (both assessed);
- Support and facilitation from a team of programme supervisors;
- Informal and formal collaboration with fellow students via email, teleconferences, face-to-face meetings, and the VLE.

### Teaching and Learning

*Please indicate which methods are used, i.e., lectures, seminars, practical sessions etc. Include any activity that does not lead to summative assessment. How is the programme taught? How do students learn?*

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
- 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.
- facilitated webinars with experts where students can ask questions and engage in live discussions (online streams).

## Assessment

Please list below summative assessments for the course and how they meet the learning outcomes listed above. Ensure these are aligned with your course regulations ([Statutes and Ordinances](#)).

Assessment	Learning Outcome
<p><i>Analysis Paper (3000 words)</i> A detailed, critical analysis of a sustainability challenge or opportunity for a specific organisation, culminating in clear strategic recommendations.</p>	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 5A, 6A
<p><i>Strategic Action Plan (3000 words)</i> 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.</p>	3A, 3B, 3C, 5A, 6A
<p><i>Group Project (7000 words)</i> 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.</p>	5A, 5B, 6A

## Progression and Career Destinations

Please describe the opportunities for the students' personal and professional development (including transferable and employability skills). Please include information relating to successful graduates' prospects for employment.

On completion of the first teaching block, students are invited to join the CISL Network which brings together over 40,000 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 or to enable a transition to a career where sustainability is more prominent. The programme takes an applied approach to knowledge, with both the teaching and assignments oriented towards relevance to their work situation. Research into the sustainability job market indicates 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 investments in “green” sectors.