

Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business

Indicative curriculum themes

System pressures and trends. This topic introduces the broad debate around sustainability, looking at global sustainability challenges and developing a system-wide understanding that recognises the interdependency of natural, social, political, cultural, economic and technological dimensions. The purpose and objectives of business in addressing these challenges is considered, exploring possible leadership aims and responses.

Deeper dives into sustainability risks and opportunities. This part of the course provides the opportunity to take a closer look at the risks and opportunities associated with climate change, poverty and inequality, and ecosystems and bio-diversity, exploring why they matter from a business, as well as planetary and societal perspective.

Sustainability concepts. This topic explores some of the seminal concepts and frameworks for sustainability and sustainable development, and examines their relative merits and strengths. A systems approach is emphasised, which explores the complexity and interconnectivity inherent within dynamic adaptive systems, and the importance of taking a holistic and integrated approach.

Rewiring the economy. We critically engage with the current economic paradigm and associated trends in economic thinking, and then explore some of the key levers for change in shifting to an economy which 'works' – supporting universal human development and flourishing within environmental limits.

Business leadership. In the face of global challenges and opportunities, this topic unpacks the rationale for business taking a pro-active role in responding to a rapidly changing external context. The evolving relationship between business and sustainability over the last few decades is explored, culminating in a look at the frontiers for business and sustainability. We look at some of the tools and approaches for prioritising business action, and then look at what it means to build the business case for strategic leadership.

Strategic planning for action. In this first topic of the second workshop, we look at a number of different theories, tools and approaches for taking strategic action on sustainability, including hearing from those who have built the internal case for sustainability, different approaches to strategy and planning, stakeholder mapping and engagement, and theoretical and practical insights into organisational change.

Catalysing change in the wider system. This topic considers a range of levers for system-level change, including:

- Technology and innovation
- Influencing policy
- Sustainable design
- Circular business models
- Industrial ecology
- Finance and investment

Communication and influencing. In this topic, we explore a number of different insights into communication and influence, including behavioural insights into motivational values, working effectively with others (e.g. partners) through engaging with multiple perspectives, and the role of storytelling.

Engaging and influencing stakeholders. Successful sustainability initiatives require internal and external engagement. This topic explores effective engagement internally with middle management and employees, working with suppliers and other actors across the value chains, and influencing consumer behaviour through the promotion of sustainable lifestyles.

Leadership for Sustainability. Although a cross-cutting theme running through all the sessions, this workshop also includes a specific opportunity to reflect on values, ethics and leadership, a chance to develop your own practice framework for leadership, and the opportunity to hear candid stories from those who have been seeking to lead for sustainability within their own organisations.