



University of the
West of England

MODULE SPECIFICATION

Code: UMED4L-15-M **Title:** The Sustainable Organisation: Vision into practice **Version:** 1

Level: M **UWE credit rating:** 15 **ECTS credit rating:** 7.5

Module type: Project

Owning Faculty: FBL **Field:** Economics

Faculty Committee approval: QMAC **Date:** 14 October 2011

Valid from: September 2012 **Discontinued from:**

Contributes towards: MSc Sustainable Development in Practice

Pre-requisites: None

Co-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Aim of module

This module aims to outline the vision of a sustainable business, operating in a complex of ecosystem and resource constraints and compares this with the reality of contemporary business. The gap is bridged by considering a range of practical and analytical tools and a suite of change management strategies. The module draws extensively on case study material and is an essential component of the programme, providing the insights and skills necessary to move businesses and other organisations towards sustainable strategies and operations.

Learning outcomes:

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- Analyse the contextual pressures deriving from resource scarcity and ecosystem degradation and assess how these impact on operations and strategy (Component A, elements 1 & 2)
- Employ various conceptual frameworks and project appraisal methods to assist strategy formulation and the design of metrics for assessing progress in strategy implementation. (Component A, elements 1 & 2)
- Conceive the broad impact of new sustainable technologies across many business sectors in terms of efficiency enhancement and market openings. (Component A, elements 1 & 2)
- Be conversant with sociological and management concepts and theories of organisational behaviour, change projects, risk and sustainability and apply these critically to appraise the operation of businesses in the light of their stated social and environmental policies. (Component A, elements 1 & 2)
- Participate effectively in decision-making processes and practices in complex global environments to demonstrate confidence and skill in applying models, systems and theory in planning and evaluating the performance of global operations. (Component A, elements 1 & 2)
- Develop leadership skills necessary for ethically managing sustainability driven organisational change in the global context. (Component A, elements 1 & 2)

In addition the educational experience may explore, develop, and practise but not formally discretely

assess the following:

- Working as a team member.
- Prioritising actions to maximise measured outputs

Syllabus outline:

1. A resource based approach to sustainability- valuing the present and the future benefits and costs of a project exploiting resources. Resource markets and how they fail. Case studies and use of CBA Builder software.
2. Energy sources and climate change. Evaluation of alternative generation systems.
3. Market failure, externalities and ecological impact. Case studies of policies to correct or offset market failure.
4. Conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the organisation's strategy: The Five Capitals, The Triple Bottom Line, The Natural Steps and the sustainable operational response – Life Cycle Analysis, closed systems, carbon accounting and ecological footprinting
5. Contrasting incremental and radical strategies: greening operations versus new technologies and new markets
6. Change management aimed at making a business /organisation more sustainable informed by a critical understanding of organisational structures, complex supply chains, projects, governance, human / employee rights in a global context;
7. The challenges and risks in responding to the current 'sustainability crisis' - the issues of authority, accountability, decision making, problem definition and prioritisation, power, collaboration and ethics of adaptation.

Teaching and learning methods:

Teaching strategy: Students will be directed towards the University Library online Study Skills resources for the development of skills appropriate to the level and style of the module. Students will be directed on how the resources on this site should be used to develop the skills that will underpin their studies in the module handbook and/or via Blackboard

<http://www.uwe.ac.uk/library/resources/hub/>

The nature of this module requires the development of sophisticated, critical discursive and writing skills, and analysis of case studies. Students will be introduced to a range of theoretical frameworks, and given the opportunity to discuss and explore them in seminars. They will then be expected to review case study examples of the application of theories, and for assessment demonstrate their understanding of the material through the practical application of this knowledge to a particular task. Discussions and debates that originate in seminars can continue with student and staff postings on Blackboard. This can also work in reverse: the foundations of a debate can be laid using VLEs and then followed up in face to face seminar discussion.

Learning strategy: The sources of case study material will vary depending on the circumstances of the student. The principal sources will be the workplace (for those students that are in employment) and organisations to which students and the University have existing links, including the team and board that have responsibility for embedding sustainability in UWE's governance and operations. Students will be introduced to a range of analytical techniques which they can apply to their/an organisational context. They will be provided with tools to undertake this principally in the form of software (such as *Defra emission parameters*, *CBA builder*, *Gabi*, *Hubsphere*, *Energy 2050* and *REAP*) which they can access remotely or download onto their own laptops.

Nominal study hours:

Directed contact learning (seminar/tutorials): 15 hours

Directed online learning (VLE discussions/activities): 10 hours

Independent learning: 100 hours

Assessment (including case study preparation): 25 hours

Total: 150 hours

Reading Strategy

Essential reading: Students are not expected to purchase a core text for this module, inasmuch as there is no one textbook available on the market that serves as such. Instead, they will be provided with references for a set of recommended readings specific to each issue addressed in the learning and teaching programme (via the VLE), which they are expected to consult throughout the duration of the module. Due to the focus of the course being on the practical application of analytical frameworks and performance metrics in strategy formulation, a substantial amount of reading material will be from the grey literature in this area, including government commissioned studies and reports.

Further reading will be required to supplement the recommended reading, with the purpose of ensuring that students are familiar with seminal and most recent works of relevance. A list of readings to accompany each contact session will be posted on the VLE, but students are also expected to use their initiative in selecting literature that is appropriate to their studies. (Much of this will take the form of research articles in journals such as *Energy Policy*; *Environment and Planning*; *Theory, Culture and Society*, *Business Strategy Review*, *Futures Research Quarterly*, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*). To this end, they will receive training in the use of the library catalogue, bibliographic databases and other electronic resources..

Indicative Reading List:

- Behrensa, A., Giljuma, S., Kovandab, J., & Nizac, S. (2007). The material basis of the global economy: Worldwide patterns of natural resource extraction and their implications for sustainable resource use policies'. *Ecological Economics*, Vol. 64, Iss. 2, pp. 444-453
- Gladwin T, Kennelly J and Krause T-S (1995) 'Shifting Paradigms for Sustainable Development: Implications for Management Theory and Research' *Academy of Management Review* , Vol 20 No 4, pp.874-907
- Hulme, M. (2010) *Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity*, Cambridge
- Kane G (2010) *The Three Secrets of Green Business: Unlocking competitive advantage in a low carbon economy* Earthscan: London
- Myers, N. & Kent, J. (2003). 'New consumers: The influence of affluence on the environment'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, Vol. 100, No. 8, pp. 4963-4968
- Nordhaus, W.D. (2007) 'To Tax or Not to Tax: Alternative Approaches to Slowing Global Warming', *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy*, 1,1, 26-44
- Raskin P et al (2002) 'Great Transition: The Promise and Lure of the Times Ahead', *Report of the Global Scenario Group, Stockholm Environment Institute* – Boston
- Stern, N (2008) *Key Elements of a Global Deal on Climate Change*, London School of Economics and Political Science

Journals:

Business Strategy Review,
Environment, Development and Sustainability
Environmental Policy & Governance
Energy Policy;
Environment and Planning;
Futures Research Quarterly,
Journal of Environment and Planning
Journal of Industrial Ecology
Theory, Culture and Society,
Technological Forecasting and Social Change

Websites:

Business Innovation and Skills
Centre for the Analysis of Regulation and Risk
Carbon Disclosure Standards Board
Carbon Trust
Clean Development Mechanism

DECC
DEFRA
EU Road Map 2050
Global Reporting Initiative
Mirrlees on tax reform
National Audit Office
Plundered Planet
Tyndall Centre

Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy is designed to assess learning outcomes which range from the appreciation of a set of interrelated and complex issues to the ability to apply specific analytical and strategy formulation techniques. The mixed media output assesses the students ability to use one or more of a variety of media including graphics, posters, video and role play to communicate and conceptualise a web of complex issues. The focus of the module is the organisation and a case study organisation provides the ideal vehicle for assessing the ability to apply analytical and strategy formulation techniques. The evaluation report is more than a descriptive case study. The use of a wide range of analytical techniques will be assessed as will the ability to conceive imaginative proposals which reflect the complexity of the organisations environment.

Formative assessment and feedback will provided by using VLEs as a system whereby students can submit drafts of assessed work for comment. This can be accessed by all students and thus will provide a rich source of information and inspiration.

ATTEMPT 1

First Assessment Opportunity

Component A

Description of each element

Element weighting

1 Evaluation of own or other suitable organisation: 2500 word (report)
(final assessment)

80%

2. Presentation (20 mins presentations, 10 mins Q&A)

20%

Second Assessment Opportunity (Resit) (further attendance at taught classes is not required)

Component A

Description of each element

Element weighting

1 Evaluation of own or other suitable organisation: 3000 word (report)

100%

Specification confirmed byDate
(Associate Dean/Programme Director)