Module Specification

Environment and Society

Version: 2025-26, v2.0, Approved

Contents

Part 1: Information

Module title: Environment and Society

Module code: USSKAB-30-1

Level: Level 4

For implementation from: 2025-26

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

College: College of Health, Science & Society

School: CHSS School of Applied Sciences

Partner institutions: None

Field: Applied Sciences

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: This module examines scientific, political, economic, ecological and social concepts and perspectives behind current global environmental challenges. Students will be introduced to the broad spectrum of interdisciplinary skills and knowledge base required to understand and find solutions for global environmental challenges.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: This module aims to:
Enable graduates to evaluate the key issues, threats and opportunities linked with international and national approaches for sustainable development.
Enable graduates to use and demonstrate theoretical concepts and approaches to solve global environmental challenges.

Outline syllabus: This module examines how environmental problems and their solutions (Sustainable Development) relate to social, political and economic imperatives. Specifically this module will introduce the following (indicative syllabus):

Global Environmental Challenges
The history of the human planet. Human population growth. Climate Change. The energy crisis. Ocean challenges. Land Use Change and biodiversity loss. Pollution and waste. Food and farming.

Sustainable Development
What is Sustainable Development? The meaning of the 'three pillars of Sustainable Development' – economic development, social development and environmental protection. Introduction of Sustainable Development models, The Natural Step, Twelve Capitals, and the triple Bottom Line.

Society
Different cultural and religious perspectives on environment. Historical growth of environmentalism and impact on global societies, economies and politics. Introduction to political ecology. Shaping the agenda and roles of pressure groups and industry at local and national level.

Economics
Introduction to current economic discourse, including concepts such as opportunity costs, entropic scarcity, flow-fund resource matrix, supply and demand social costs and public goods, and approaches to solving environmental problems, such as taxes, tradable permits, tort law, and environmental safety standards.

Policy Making and Implementation

Legislative framework for policy making: Parliament, local authorities, the European Union. The Governmental institutions involved in the implementation of Sustainable Development initiatives (government departments, local authorities, Environment Agency). Global policy frameworks – World Summit on Sustainable Development outputs, Millennium Development Goals and UN Conventions on Climate Change, Desertification and Biodiversity. Scientific controversies – Climate Change, Mining Development and GM case studies.

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: A variety of teaching and learning approaches will be employed. The module will be delivered using lectures, online videos/resources and workshops/tutorials. Lectures will be used to introduce main concepts and to guide and inform student centred learning while tutorials and workshops will provide students the opportunity to discuss and apply issues in-depth.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Discuss the theoretical concept of Sustainable Development with particular reference to economic development, social development and environmental protection.

MO2 Understand how environmental problems and their solutions relate to political, social and economic imperatives in relation to Sustainable Development.

MO3 Discuss the need for, and barriers to, an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of environmental problems with particular reference to their social, ecological and economic dimensions.

MO4 Apply the above economic, social and environmental concepts and methods from the discourse of Sustainable Development in real-world case studies within the context of workshops.

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Face-to-face learning = 72 hours

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at readinglists.uwe.ac.uk via the following link https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/usskab-30-1.html

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: Assessment 1: Portfolio (2000 words maximum)
A portfolio of answers to questions designed to test knowledge across the teaching materials and learning outcomes. This assessment will asses student's understanding of historical and cultural development of the industrial worldview and how this worldview may be advantageous or disadvantageous for solving global environmental issues.

Assessment 2: Report (1500 words)
A study of the GEO-6 Report. Students chose one of the five states of the global environment and summarise the trends and challenges, they then assess the policy options available with examples to solve their chosen state of the global environmental.

Opportunities for formative assessment are embedded in the module teaching and take a variety of forms, including: in class and on-line tests and quizzes, problem-solving workshops.

Assessment tasks:

Portfolio (First Sit)
Description: Answers to a portfolio of questions.
Weighting: 50 %
Final assessment: No

Group work: No
Learning outcomes tested: MO3, MO4

Report (First Sit)
Description: 1500 word report
Weighting: 50 %
Final assessment: Yes
Group work: No
Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2

Portfolio (Resit)
Description: Answers to a portfolio of questions.
Weighting: 50 %
Final assessment: No
Group work: No
Learning outcomes tested: MO3, MO4

Report (Resit)
Description: 1500 word report
Weighting: 50 %
Final assessment: Yes
Group work: No
Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Environmental Science {Foundation} [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2024-25

Environmental Science {Foundation} [Frenchay] - WITHDRAWN MSci 2024-25

Environmental Science [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2025-26