



Programme Specification

Sustainability and Environmental Management [UWE Online]

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Section 1: Key Programme Details

Part A: Programme Information

Programme title: Sustainability and Environmental Management [UWE Online]

Highest award: MSc Sustainability and Environmental Management

Interim award: PGCert Sustainability and Environmental Management

Interim award: PGDip Sustainability and Environmental Management

Awarding institution: UWE Bristol

Teaching institutions: UWE Bristol

Study abroad: No

Year abroad: No

Sandwich year: No

Credit recognition: No

School responsible for the programme: CATE School of Architecture and Environment, College of Arts, Technology and Environment

Professional, statutory or regulatory bodies: Not applicable

Modes of delivery: Distance without attendance

Entry requirements: For current entry requirements, see the UWE public website.

For implementation from: 01 September 2025

Programme code: D44B62

Section 2: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Part A: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Overview: The MSc in Sustainability and Environmental Management is designed to meet the needs of a range of potential candidates from recent graduates to working professionals, in any discipline, wishing to achieve a post-graduate qualification in Sustainability and Environmental Management. Students will gain an appreciation for the application of sustainability principles to a range of societal and professional contexts, with an emphasis on environmental management.

The academic focus of the programme is on the development of a rigorous understanding of the scientific, theoretical and philosophical considerations underlying the notion of sustainable development and the practical application of these through effective environmental management. The aim is to develop sound conceptual knowledge and foster a reflective and critical awareness of environmental management, its disciplinary foundations and practice.

This programme responds to the need for professionals and activists who are able to facilitate pro sustainability change. Designed by a multi-disciplinary team of experts, the programme aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills and competencies to respond to the challenge of applying sustainability and environmental management principles to a broad range of professional contexts.

Key topics, concepts and areas of study

Students will explore specific areas of environmental management, namely climate change, air quality, water quality and security, sustainable energy and carbon futures. Process-based topics include behaviour change, environmental assessment and organisation. Across modules, students consider holistic systems and multiple contexts in which principles of sustainability and environmental management need to be applied in order for outcomes of sustainable development to be achieved.

Why this programme at UWE?

This MSc Sustainability and Environmental Management draws upon the expertise of researchers across UWE's research community. Students will have access to research outputs and events from research units including:

Centre for Environment, Society and Resilience

Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments

Centre for Transport and Society
Sustainable Economies Research Group

UWE is a recognised leader in sustainability and environmental management in the UK higher education sector. The university has won multiple awards and accreditations for its sustainability work. Details can be found here: <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/about/values-vision-strategy/sustainability> Students on this programme will be able to draw upon institutional case studies of practice to inform their learning. UWE has institutional sustainability commitments in its Strategy 2030 (<https://www.uwe.ac.uk/about/values-vision-strategy/strategy-2030>) and an ambitious Climate Action and Sustainability Strategy (<https://www.uwe.ac.uk/about/values-vision-strategy/sustainability/strategy-leadership-and-plans/policy-and-strategy-documents>).

Features of the programme: On completion of this programme, students will have developed a strong understanding of fundamental issues and theoretical concepts in relation to sustainability and environmental management. They will also have mastered critical skills in reading, writing and analysis and an ability to communicate, orally and in writing, to a range of audiences. These attributes will ensure students are able to demonstrate aptitude in identifying and managing sustainability and environmental concerns in a range of contexts, for example, in relation to climate change, and will be able to apply a holistic approach to solving real-world problems.

This programme has been designed to meet the expectations of professional bodies (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES)). Professional bodies enable students to access resources, support and networks relevant to professional practice and career development. Students on this programme will also have access to the Careers Toolkit App: a 24/7 careers team in your pocket to help to finesse their interview skills, build CVs, career test and much more.

Educational Aims: The specific educational aims of the MSc Sustainability and Environmental Management are to:

Provide a challenging and rigorous programme in sustainability and management that is underpinned by the University's research, consultancy and operational experience in these areas, and which addresses the demands of practice in both professional and community settings;

Enable students to meet the expectations of relevant professional benchmarks such as the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA);

Support students in bringing their multiple intelligences (including intellectual, creative, interpersonal and intrapersonal) to bear in meeting the challenge of creating pro sustainability change;

Encourage students to critically examine the link between theoretical concepts, current research and environmental management in practice;

Deliver a programme which draws on multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches;

Provide a coherent, yet flexible programme which allows for programme content to be aligned to personal and professional contexts and to career aspirations and which meets the expectations of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and professional bodies for high quality education;

Provide a programme that is academically challenging, relevant, and engaging which encourages students to develop their capacity for independent, analytical and reflective thought and judgment; and,

Produce reflexive and autonomous graduates that have the knowledge, tools and competencies necessary to be skilful, dynamic and innovative in facilitating pro sustainability change in a variety of contexts and settings.

Programme Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this programme graduates will achieve the following learning outcomes.

Programme Learning Outcomes

- PO1. Critically analyse contemporary environmental and sustainability challenges and organise these into a complex systems diagram.
- PO2. Create outputs in a variety of formats, based on academic literature, which communicate sustainability and environmental principles to a variety of audiences.
- PO3. Critically evaluate and integrate existing theories, research, and practices relevant to sustainability and environmental management across diverse contexts.
- PO4. Judge the relevance and validity of evidence in sustainability and environmental management decision-making, and produce original and coherent evidence-based arguments.
- PO5. Critique the value of policy and legislation in addressing real-world sustainability and environmental management challenges, and propose and critically evaluate alternative solutions.
- PO6. Critically assess the importance of partnership and collaboration in innovating and taking action on sustainability and environmental (management) challenges.
- PO7. Critically evaluate methodologies and plan, conduct and present an independent project.
- PO8. Gather, prepare, process and critically interpret data using appropriate techniques and use appropriate numerical, statistical and qualitative techniques to generate new knowledge or understanding.
- PO9. Develop professional competencies and transferable skills necessary for employment e.g. using initiative and personal responsibility, decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.
- PO10. Use reflexive learning to build self-awareness of personal competencies and skills including decision-making abilities, strategic thinking, interpersonal strengths and overall leadership style, fostering growth and adaptability in sustainability and environmental management roles.

Assessment strategy: The MSc Sustainability and Environmental Management is designed to enable assessment as, for and of learning. Examples of ways by which this perspective on assessment is met are:

Assessment as learning: Students self-review to critically evaluate their work.

Assessment for learning: Use of real-life scenarios and focus on development of students' ability to act on feedback and to identify and build links from their work to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

Assessment of learning: Students are provided with a choice of topics related to sustainable development and environmental management.

Student engagement with assessment is facilitated from the beginning of each module and supports students to develop a deep approach to learning. The programme and each module set out clear guidance on how students will achieve and demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes and professional competency standards.

This programme adopts the principle of authentic assessment. Assessment tasks will be based on those likely to be encountered in the workplace; enabling students to develop and evidence valuable transferable employability skills. Students engage in diverse authentic assessment types and formats such as:

- Research-led and enquiry-based, reflective evaluations of real-life case studies, working across a range of spatial and temporal scales;
- Reports based on skills in observation and analysis to support decision-making in the light of uncertainty;
- Oral accounts and presentations of processes and issues, including an appreciation of societal contribution and context.

Assessments are specifically designed to scaffold skills development in the first four modules to help support assessments within the second four modules and the dissertation.

Where appropriate, assessments take multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches and are clearly underpinned by education for sustainable development principles to achieve positive graduate outcomes. Assessments are designed to

respond to real issues and contexts, relevant to industry, institutions, public services, third sector or communities.

Assessment is inclusive for all students. It is designed in a way that facilitates learning and supports students to succeed, and it is clearly linked to specified learning outcomes and/ or desired competencies. Where appropriate, modified and alternative provision is available to avoid EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity) barriers. The university's usual reasonable adjustments apply.

Feedback is an important part of the assessment cycle and is provided in a variety of formats. All feedback supports students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and continuing performance needs. Formative feedback is provided by tutors and students are supported to develop confidence in undertaking and valuing personal reflection, and peer and self-assessment. Such feedback and reflection can enable transformative learning and prepare students for workplace reality.

Through this strategic approach to assessment, the programme aims to cultivate reflective practitioners who continuously evolve and develop. The multifaceted approach ensures that students engage with course content in various ways, reinforcing their learning and preparing them for success in practising sustainability and environmental management.

Student support: We prioritise student success, offering dedicated student support to address any concerns promptly. This support covers student onboarding and preparation activities, general pastoral care and the in-depth academic guidance and support needed for online students to succeed.

Throughout a student's journey, we emphasise the importance of academic and pastoral support. Academic inquiries will be directed to module tutors and UWE support staff, ensuring that students receive expert guidance during the duration of their studies. Meanwhile, our student support team is here to assist with any pastoral non-academic concerns, providing assistance through whatever channel the student prefers to use, whether app, email, or phone.

Using a ticketing system in our student information management system, the student support team efficiently manages inquiries, ensuring no issue goes unresolved. The team is equipped to handle a wide range of student support needs, from technical difficulties to time management and personal challenges.

We understand that timely assistance is crucial, which is why our support staff monitor key engagement metrics and proactively outreach to any at risk student, to ensure swift responses and effective resolutions. Every student interaction is logged in the student information management system, ensuring a seamless support experience.

Part B: Programme Structure

Year 1

Students must take 90 credits from the modules in Year 1 comprising six from the eight 15 credit modules in the programme.

The order in which students take modules depends on their intake month.

Year 1 Compulsory Modules (Year 1 and Year 2)

Students must take 90 credits from the Compulsory Modules (Year 1 and Year 2) in Year 1. Students must take the remaining 30 credits in Year 2.

The order in which students take modules depends on their intake month.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLL88-15-M	Sustainable Development: Principles and Practice 2025-26	15
UBLL87-15-M	The Sustainable Organisation: Vision into Practice 2025-26	15
UBLL8A-15-M	Climate Change and Climate Action: a multidisciplinary perspective 2025-26	15
UBLL86-15-M	Environmental Assessment 2025-26	15

UZVYR6-15-M	Creating Systems and Behaviour Change for Sustainable Development 2025-26	15
UBLL89-15-M	Air Quality Management 2025-26	15
UBLL85-15-M	Renewable Energy and Carbon Futures 2025-26	15
UBLL84-15-M	Sustainable Water Management: Issues and Challenges 2025-26	15

Year 2

Students must take 90 credits from the modules in Year 2 comprising the remaining two 15 credit modules not taken in Year 1 plus the 60 credit Masters Project.

Year 2 Compulsory Modules

Students must take 90 credits from the modules in Compulsory modules comprising the remaining two 15 credit modules not taken in Year 1 plus the 60 credit Masters Project.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLL8C-60-M	Masters Project 2026-27	60

Part C: Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) Synopsis

Students graduating will have been exposed to key debates, policies and legislative frameworks in Sustainable Development and Environmental Management, and will be equipped as critical, professional practitioners. They will have developed professional confidence by rehearsing and implementing complex theoretical concepts in tasks that emulate professional practice. Graduates will be competent and effective communicators, in both written and spoken forms.

Part D: External Reference Points and Benchmarks

The following documents have been used to develop the programme.

QAA UK Quality Code for HE

-Framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ)

https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/the-frameworks-for-higher-education-qualifications-of-uk-degree-awarding-bodies-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=3562b281_11

-Subject benchmark statement for Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/sbs/sbs-earth-sciences-environmental-sciences-and-environmental-studies-22.pdf?sfvrsn=1cacdc81_6

-Qualification characteristics for Master's degrees <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/characteristics-statements/characteristics-statement-masters-degrees>

Advance HE/ QAA (2021) ESD Guidance for HE <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/education-sustainable-development-higher-education#guidance>

UNESCO cross-cutting and specialized SDG competencies

<https://www.unsdglearn.org/unesco-cross-cutting-and-specialized-sdg-competencies/>

Professional body expectations

IEEMA <https://www.iema.net/sustainability-skills-map/>

IES <https://www.the-ies.org/accreditation>

UWE Strategy 2030

UWE policies

Staff research projects

Part E: Regulations

Approved to University Regulations and Procedures.