



Programme Specification

Sustainable Development in Practice [Frenchay]

Version: 2027-28, v1.0, Validated

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Section 1: Key Programme Details

Part A: Programme Information

Programme title: Sustainable Development in Practice [Frenchay]

Highest award: MSc Sustainable Development in Practice

Interim award: PGCert Sustainable Development in Practice

Interim award: PGDip Sustainable Development in Practice

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:

Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP)

Modes of delivery: Full-time, Part-time

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

For implementation from: 01 September 2026

Programme code: F8NA12

Section 2: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Part A: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Overview: 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 creating behavioural, organisational and social change. Creating a learning experience in which students can explore, test and develop key concepts, tools and approaches in the context of practice and work-based learning is a fundamental underpinning principle of the course.

Features of the programme: The programme is accredited (pending) by the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP), formerly IEMA.

There is opportunity to personalise the learning journey in this programme through choice of assessment topic, choice of professional practice project and context and choice of final project topic.

Bristol and the wider Bristol region has a strong reputation for sustainability thinking, practice and action. Students can draw upon local experience and expertise through the course.

Educational Aims: The specific educational aims of the programme are to:

Provide a challenging and rigorous programme in sustainability and change 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;

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

Provide a programme that offers varied and flexible patterns of study suited to students and employers and which make it possible for programme content to be

aligned to professional needs and career aspirations;

Enable students to become reflexive and autonomous learners as an integral part of their practice and development as agents of pro sustainability change;

Produce 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. Sustainable Development: Systematic understanding of sustainability issues, and a critical awareness of current problems and new insights, informed by the latest academic understanding and professional practice
- PO2. 2.Frameworks and Tools: Confidence in understanding of and possible applications for frameworks, methodologies, and tools for integrating sustainability in business, organisations, behaviour and culture change contexts.
- PO3. Systems thinking: Ability to recognize and understand relationships and to analyse complex systems.
- PO4. Pro-sustainability Strategy: Ability to plan and evaluate innovative actions that further sustainability.
- PO5. Collaboration: Ability to learn from others; to understand and respect the needs, perspectives and actions of others (empathy); to understand, relate to and be sensitive to others (empathic leadership)
- PO6. Communication Skills: Effectively communicate sustainability concepts to diverse audiences and facilitate collaboration.
- PO7. Project Management: Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.

- PO8. Research Techniques: Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of research techniques applicable to undertaking research in a chosen field and use of these to create, interpret, and report on knowledge in sustainability.
- PO9. Critical thinking: Ability to question norms, practices and opinions; to reflect on one's own values, perceptions and actions; and to take a position in the sustainability discourse.
- PO10. Critical Analysis: Analyse and evaluate texts, theories, and real-world scenarios to inform solutions to sustainability challenges.

Assessment strategy:

The MSc Sustainable Development in Practice is designed to enable assessment as, for and of learning (in line with guidance on education for sustainable development).

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.

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 and organisational contribution and context.

Assessments are specifically designed to scaffold skills development across core 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. Use of formative feedback will also help assessors to ensure summative work is the students' own by identifying a consistent progression of learning and the students' voices. Written assignments may include a short critical discussion/viva to design out the risk of Assessment Offences.

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 sustainable development.

Student support: STUDENT SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

Student learning is supported by researchers and academics with relevant expertise and experience from across the University. A module guide is provided before each module commences, which includes prereading, the module teaching and learning plan and the module assessment. Students have access to online resources and the UWE library, which provides services for remote and part-time students as well as a dedicated learning resources room and technical and administrative support.

The University provides a student advisor system and Module leaders are available via email or private tutorial to provide further guidance on any aspect of the programme. The programme team will be vigilant in ensuring that the variety of study modes and work experience backgrounds are accounted for in the mechanisms that are put in place to ensure a strong cohort identity.

The central strands of the cohort identity strategy are:

Induction:

An intensive day-long induction programme will be compulsory for all students and will include team-building exercises and the establishment of community with contributions from staff and students.

Collaborative and project-focussed approaches to learning, teaching and assessment:

The collaborative nature of the programme will enable students to develop and manage their learning and skills in the context of a vibrant and cohesive learning community.

Online community:

Communication developed via online tools will be reinforced by tutors through contact sessions and supervision.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The University has long experience of managing workplace learning and these experiences will be drawn upon in the management of this programme using best practice. The key elements of the strategy to support students undertaking professional practice development on this programme are:

The provision of a university placements office to broker opportunities for the placement of students within a workplace setting;

The establishment of an agreement and relevant policies between the University and the employer to ensure that the employer is aware of their requirements and commitment to the development of professional practice;

The development of a learning contract between the learner, manager and professional practice tutor to reflect the student's learning needs and goals, ensuring that these are in line with specific organisational goals; and,

The allocation of a tutor to each student who will guide the student through professional practice development and relevant module assessment.

Part B: Programme Structure

Year 1

Full-time students must take 180 credits from the modules in Year 1, comprising 150 compulsory modules and 30 credits of optional modules from departmental offerings available from Geography and Environmental Management and / or Architecture and the Built Environment and/or in other areas offered by other Faculties that complement the core learning on the programme, as advised by the Programme Leader.

Part-time students must take between 60 and 120 credits in Year 1, depending on which year they take UBGMF4-30-M Professional Practice, and whether they take 15 or 30 credits of optional modules, or no optional modules.

Year 1 Compulsory Modules (Full-time)

Full-time students must take 150 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (Full-time).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLLD3-15-M	Sustainable Business and Consultancy 2027-28	15
UPCAJH-15-M	Communications Campaigns: Creative Approaches and Tools 2027-28	15
UZVSK9-15-M	Creating Systems and Behaviour Change for Sustainable Development 2027-28	15
UBGMRK-60-M	Masters Project 2027-28	60
UBGMF9-15-M	Sustainable Development: Principles and Practice 2027-28	15
UBGMF4-30-M	Professional Practice 2027-28	30

Year 1 Compulsory Modules (Part-time)

Part-time students must take 60 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (Part-time).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLLD3-15-M	Sustainable Business and Consultancy 2027-28	15
UPCAJH-15-M	Communications Campaigns: Creative Approaches and Tools 2027-28	15
UZVSK9-15-M	Creating Systems and Behaviour Change for Sustainable Development 2027-28	15
UBGMF9-15-M	Sustainable Development: Principles and Practice 2027-28	15

Year 1 Optional Modules (Full-time)

Full-time students must select 30 credits of optional modules from departmental offerings available from Geography and Environmental Management and / or Architecture and the Built Environment and/or in other areas offered by other Faculties that complement the core learning on the programme, as advised by the Programme Leader.

Possible examples include: exploring the application of sustainability in a context different to that explored in core modules (e.g. engineering), further developing skills in affecting sustainability change (e.g. activism and the media or advanced feature writing), specialising in one or more aspect of sustainability (e.g. modules relating to air quality, etc.) or exploring sustainability at a wider scope than the community/city/organisational level covered by the core learning on the programme (e.g. national and international law).

Optional modules offered each year may be subject to change and are dependent on availability.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
CATEOPTM	CATE Optional Module Portfolio M 2027-28	0

Year 1 Optional Modules (Part-time)

Part-time students may take this module in their first or second year of study:

UBGMF4-30-M Professional Practice

Part time students can choose to take their optional modules in Year 1 or Year 2. Part-time students can select no options, or 15 or 30 credits of optional modules in Year 1 from subject offerings available from Geography and Environmental Management and / or Architecture and the Built Environment and/or in other areas offered by other Schools that complement the core learning on the programme, as advised by the Programme Leader.

Possible examples include: exploring the application of sustainability in a context different to that explored in core modules (e.g. engineering), further developing skills in affecting sustainability change (e.g. activism and the media or advanced feature writing), specialising in one or more aspect of sustainability (e.g. modules relating to air quality, etc.) or exploring sustainability at a wider scope than the community/city/organisational level covered by the core learning on the programme (e.g. national and international law).

Optional modules offered each year may be subject to change and are dependent on availability.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
CATEOPTM	CATE Optional Module Portfolio M 2027-28	0
UBGMF4-30-M	Professional Practice 2027-28	30

Year 2

Part-time students must take between 60 and 120 credits in Year 2 depending on whether or not they have already taken UBGMF4-30-M Work-Based Learning in Sustainability and Environmental Management in Year 1, and 15 or 30 credits of optional modules, or no optional modules in Year 1.

Year 2 Compulsory Modules

Part-time students must take 60 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (Part-time).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBGMRK-60-M	Masters Project 2028-29	60

Year 2 Optional Modules (Part-time)

Part-time students must complete their 30 credits of optional modules (depending on the number of optional module credits taken in Year 1) from the subject offerings available from Geography and Environmental Management and / or Architecture and the Built Environment and/or in other areas offered by other Schools that complement the core learning on the programme, as advised by the Programme Leader.

Possible examples include: exploring the application of sustainability in a context different to that explored in core modules (e.g. engineering), further developing skills in affecting sustainability change (e.g. activism and the media or advanced feature writing), specialising in one or more aspect of sustainability (e.g. modules relating to air quality, etc.) or exploring sustainability at a wider scope than the community/city/organisational level covered by the core learning on the programme (e.g. national and international law).

Optional modules offered each year may be subject to change and are dependent on availability.

If part time students have taken 30 credits of optional modules in Year 1, part time students do not need to take any optional modules in Year 2.

Students must take module UBGMF4-30-M Professional Practice if they have not taken it already in year 1.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
CATEOPTM	CATE Optional Module Portfolio M 2028-29	0
UBGMF4-30-M	Professional Practice 2028-29	30

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 will be equipped as critical, professional practitioners. By following pathways that are appropriate to their career needs and aspirations, students will have acquired specialist skills and knowledge. 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

External reference points:

The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2024)

The programme has been developed in accordance with QAA statements on postgraduate qualifications, and in relation to QAA Master's Level descriptors referred to in the QAA Master's degree characteristics.

UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024)

The Geography (2022) and Earth Sciences, Environmental Science and Environmental Studies (2022) Benchmark statements have informed this programme development.

Additionally, the content has been informed by The Advance HE/ QAA Education for Sustainable Development: Guidance for UK Higher Education Providers (2021)

External Reference Points include Employer and Sector Interaction and Feedback.

The development of this programme has benefited from interaction with and feedback from employers in the private, public and third sectors. This has been obtained through ongoing with networks employers in the South West region over the many years which the programme has been running for.

Internal Reference Points include UWE's 2030 Strategy.

Professionally recognized and practice-oriented programmes:

There is a strong emphasis on the professionalization of the students on the programme by exposing them to a range assessment formats that are specifically

designed to emulate professional practice.

Connecting and working with our local and regional economy:

The opportunity to undertake professional practice provides an opportunity to engage with, and contribute to local companies and organizations. This contributes to the professional development of students, and will also help to foster the profile of the programme locally and regionally.

Being inclusive and global:

The programme has been developed in response to market research and is designed to appeal the international market, permitting students, both home and overseas, and from a variety of backgrounds, to become competent sustainability professionals by following a customizable, personally relevant programme of study.

University's Teaching and Learning Policies

The programme is also strongly supportive of the education for sustainable development elements within the University's Climate Action and Sustainability Strategy.

In line with the University's teaching and learning policies, this programme takes a student-centred approach to learning by allowing students to take control of aspects of their learning to develop individual participation and autonomy in learning. The University's focus on providing practice-oriented learning experiences, and its Graduate Attribute Framework are of particular relevance to this programme,.

A stimulating and collegiate postgraduate environment is provided, facilitated through tutor support and the wide range of research and knowledge exchange seminar programmes that are run across the institution. A variety of assessment methods are incorporated within the programme to cater for a diversity of student strengths and abilities. All assignments comply with the current version of the University's Academic Regulations and Procedures.

Research

The design and development of this programme has been strongly informed by an extensive base of research and consultancy expertise in areas relevant to its syllabus. This includes sustainability and its application in a range of sectors including business, local government and through the University's research centres.

Part E: Regulations

Approved to University Regulations and Procedures.