

IB9RG-15 Succeeding in a Sustainable Future

26/27

Department

Warwick Business School

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Ye He

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Corporate sustainability is the management of the organisation to achieve positive social, environmental and economic objectives over time. A stream of global challenges, from climate change and Covid-19 to the Ukraine war, has highlighted the need for businesses to be agile in the face of natural and social change. Increasingly, organisations aspiring to be sustainable define their very purpose around meeting societal and environmental goals and identifying business opportunities accordingly.

However, sustainability is a journey, not a destination. Although many firms and non-profits now have a chief sustainability officer supported by a sustainability department who look to drive this change, becoming a more sustainable organisation is everyone's job. So this module aims to equip all managers to participate in a successful transition to a sustainable business model.

Marketers, in particular, are crucial in this transition. The value proposition to the customer is often radically different as organisations switch to a 'triple bottom line' of social, environmental and economic objectives. Marketers need to shape that value proposition and communicate it effectively. They also require the customers' collaboration beyond buying the right thing: customer behaviours in usage and disposal are also crucial to creating both social and environmental value. This module provides a range of practical techniques that marketers need in order to fulfil this role.

It also helps students to grapple with the ethical dilemmas that are frequently thereby created.

The module is highly practical. Each topic culminates in an exercise applied to a case study organisation. The module assignment pulls these together in a report proposing a new or modified product, describing its value proposition, developing a communications and customer-behaviour plan, and explaining how the product contributes to the organisation's triple-bottom-line objectives.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

To provide students with an appreciation of the critical role of management, and marketing in particular, in creating socially, environmentally and economically sustainable societies.

To equip students to work effectively in cross-functional teams to ensure organisational success across economic, social and environmental dimensions.

To enable students to apply core tools in sustainable marketing, so as to contribute to sustainability in consumption systems while maintaining organisational success.

To enhance students' awareness of ethical issues in business, and marketing in particular, and give them practice in finding ways through those issues.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

In this fast-changing subject, the syllabus is likely to evolve. Below is an indicative syllabus:

The business case for sustainability. Dimensions of the business case; rival perspectives on the role of the firm; novel organisational forms.

Transitioning to sustainability. Benchmarking sustainability maturity; system transitions; leading sustainable transitions

Sustainability management. Business purpose; identifying production, consumption and marketing externalities; materiality matrix; triple-bottom-line scorecard.

Creating sustainable products and services. Innovation typology; circular economy; collaborative models.

The sustainability marketing mix. Engendering sustainable choices in purchase, consumption and disposal.

Managing sustainability-related dilemmas. Ethics and marketing. Empathy, logics and negotiation.

Crafting purposeful careers. Applying the SDGs to personal purpose. Aligning one's identity across work, home and society.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the internal and external governance mechanisms affecting corporate sustainability
- Demonstrate a developed understanding of ethical awareness through consideration of the dilemmas inherent in managing for sustainability
- Demonstrate understanding of the complex systems that underlie the wicked problems in sustainability
- Demonstrate critical thinking in analysing the context and role of business in planning and innovating for a sustainable future.

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

Research element

Students will need to conduct some secondary research to understand the sustainability challenges that are relevant in a particular sector, for instance in the clothing sector, where they would need to understand the role of the firm, its customers, its suppliers, as well as more generally trends in the sector and in government regulation that impact the sustainability objectives and practices of the firm

Interdisciplinary

The topic of sustainability is interdisciplinary because by its nature it responds to complex physical environmental and societal systems. This module focuses on the role of managers in businesses (and non-profit organisations) in addressing sustainability through the practices of the firm and their customers, but in so doing the firm needs to take account of the context beyond the firm. The wicked problems of sustainability - such as global warming, biodiversity loss and climate justice - require managers to be mindful of and responsive to the context beyond the traditional boundaries of the firm, including considering their role in addressing sustainability challenges through innovation and partnerships with other players in the complex systems

International

Due to the systemic nature of the sustainability topic, there will be discussions about how decisions made by managers and customers in one part of the planet may impact societies and natural environments in other parts of the world

Subject specific skills

Create triple-bottom-line value propositions

Apply communications and customer behaviour techniques to help customers achieve sustainable lifestyles

Demonstrate systems thinking skills through examining sustainability in socio-technical systems

Demonstrate enhanced creativity skills through the process of designing complex value propositions and communications

Transferable skills

Written communication

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Other activity	30 hours (20%)
Private study	48 hours (32%)
Assessment	72 hours (48%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

pre-reading for lectures

Other activity description

10 x 1 hr Synchronous or asynchronous lecture activities
10 x 2 hr workshops F2F

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Individual assignment	100%	72 hours	Yes (extension)

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

via myWBS

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of TIBS-N500 MSc in Marketing and Strategy