

IB9WH-15 Leading Sustainable Business

27/28

Department

Warwick Business School

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Hugh Wilson

Credit value

15

Module duration

9 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

A sustainable society is one which meets the needs of people and nature, both now and for future generations. This century, our civilisation faces multiple critical sustainability challenges, from climate change and biodiversity loss to rising inequality, degraded democracy, obesity, and conflict. As we have seen from Covid, Ukraine and the Middle East, these challenges inevitably affect business profoundly, creating both existential risks and transformative opportunities. Multiple sectors face radical transformation, from energy and transport to food and indeed education.

Businesses need to be agile in the face of this rapid social and economic change. This module examines how organisations can participate in sustainability transitions and profit from solving the world's problems rather than contributing to them. Many firms and non-profits now have a chief sustainability officer supported by a sustainability department who look to coordinate this endeavour, so the module examines their role and the critical processes they need. However, becoming a successful sustainable organisation is everyone's job. So this module also aims to equip all managers to participate in a successful transition to a sustainable business model.

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 on how the organisation can profitably respond to social and/or environmental challenges.

Module aims

To provide students with an appreciation of the critical role of management 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 sustainability strategy, so as to contribute to societal and environmental goals while maintaining organisational success.

To enhance students' awareness of ethical issues in business, 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 strategy. 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.

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 and for a particular firm, 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 inherently 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 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

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Online learning (scheduled sessions)	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Other activity	18 hours (12%)
Private study	49 hours (33%)
Assessment	74 hours (49%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Private study to include preparation for lectures/ seminars/ workshops and own reading

Other activity description

9 x 2hrs F2F Practical classes

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 A

Assessment component	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Individual Assignment	80%	59 hours	Yes (extension)
Individual Assignment 2500 words			

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
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Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

Group presentation (20 mins max, including Q&A)	20%	15 hours	No
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Reassessment component

Individual Assignment			Yes (extension)
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Feedback on assessment

via my.wbs

Availability

There is currently no information about the courses for which this module is core or optional.