

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION  
(Taught Postgraduate)**



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| <b>1</b> | <b>Awarding Institution</b>     | Newcastle University   |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Teaching Institution</b>     | Newcastle University   |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Final Award</b>              | MSc  |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Programme Title</b>          | MSc Sustainability Management<br>MSc Sustainability Management (with Study Abroad) |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Programme Code</b>           | 5499F<br>5500F   |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Programme Accreditation</b>  | N/A  |
| <b>7</b> | <b>QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b> | Masters Awards in Business and Management  |
| <b>8</b> | <b>FHEQ Level</b>               | 7 (180 Credits)  |
| <b>9</b> | <b>Last updated</b>             | 2 October 2023   |

**10 Programme Aims**

The Programme is designed to meet the growing demand for managers who can lead and drive sustainability change within organisations. It teaches learners how to develop and manage organisations that undergo transitions from traditional to socially and environmentally sustainable business models.

Accordingly, the Programme aims to support, empower and engage our students to:

1. acquire a broad view of how global sustainability issues affect, and are affected by, the various functions and operations of organisations;
2. gain requisite skills to review organisational policies and practices, and recommend changes to drive more sustainable business models;
3. develop projects that focus on social transformation through organisations and their stakeholders, to achieve social and environmental sustainability at organisational and societal levels.
4. offer students the opportunity to develop graduate attributes which increase employability, particularly communication and (where applicable) language skills, intercultural competencies, adaptability, resilience and global awareness.
5. gain insight into international Higher Education and experience differences in academic approach and learning environment.
6. provide the opportunity for students to experience new areas of study outside of their usual programme of study at Newcastle University.

This is a generalist course in Sustainability Management, for graduates from both business and non-business courses, and provides a pre-experience Masters qualification in Sustainability Management. The Programme reflects the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the QAA benchmark for Generalist Masters Degrees for students with little or no prior experience. The Programme has been informed by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications requirements for a level 7 award, and is compliant with prevailing University policies and QAA codes of practice. It also explicitly develops key skills sets in accordance with the the QAA Education for Sustainable Development (EfSD) Guidance.

## 11 Learning Outcomes

This research and practice led Programme provides students with opportunities to demonstrate competency in Sustainability Management by applying theories of Sustainability and related fields to challenges in achieving sustainability in organisations, such as integrating organisational operations and functions in sustainable ways, transitioning organisations to more sustainable business models, and designing born-sustainable organisations.

The Programme outcomes have been developed by reference to the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Business and Management Masters (March 2023).

### Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

A1 Acquire critical appreciation of the evolution of sustainability, social responsibility and related theories as applied to organisations and economic activity

A2 Demonstrate knowledge of, and critical reflection on, theory and practice of managing sustainability in various functions and operations of organisations

A3 Develop critical, ethical and/or responsible understanding of relationships between sustainability in organisations and global sustainability of human society

A4 Critically evaluate appropriate techniques for investigating issues in managing organisations, including sustainability management issues, and apply these techniques in a research-based project.

A5 Demonstrate the ability to adapt to different learning environments and cultures.

### Teaching and Learning Methods

Knowledge and understanding will be conveyed through lectures (A1, A2, A3), workshops (A1, A2, A3), engagement with partner organisations (A1, A2, A3), case studies (A2, A3), field trips (A2, A3), empirical and applied research (A4), policy development (A4), and, where applicable, Study Abroad opportunities (A5).

The teaching and learning methods employed in each module are student focused and encourage interactive learning. All modules will provide resources to support independent reading. In addition, students will be offered opportunities to learn through group work and independent project work (A1-A4).

Under staff supervision, students can choose to undertake an individual research project, dissertation-type, a consultancy project, or an applied research project based on a case study (A4).

### Assessment Strategy

Programme knowledge and understanding are assessed using a variety of approaches such as: individual essays (A1, A2, A3), reflective essays (A1, A2, A3), group reports / case study analyses / policy reports (A1, A2, A3), oral presentations (A1, A2, A3), individual and group projects (A1, A2, A3, A4), and a final individual research project (dissertation), consultancy report or applied research project (A4).

### Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme, students should be able to:

B1 Develop and apply systemic perspectives on complex problems at the interface between business (organisations), society and global eco-systems, using systems thinking as well as anticipatory and strategic thinking

B2 Reflect independently and critically on practical and ethical implications of complex sustainability problems and solutions at micro and macro levels of economic and social activity – thus developing advanced normative and integrated problem-solving competencies

B3 Design, develop, implement, evaluate and report on practice and/or scholarship-based research.

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

Students develop their intellectual skills by engaging in case studies (B1, B2, B3), individual projects (B1, B2, B3), and group projects (B1, B2, B3). For the capstone project module, students have the opportunity to identify, plan and implement a research programme assisted by one-on-one supervision (individual research project / dissertation) or group supervision (consultancy project or applied research project) (B1, B2, B3).

**Assessment Strategy**

Intellectual skills are assessed through individual essays and reports (B1, B2, B3), oral presentations (B1, B2, B3), case studies (B1, B2, B3), reflective reports (B1, B2) and group practice-based consultancy projects (B1, B2, B3). In the capstone project module, students can choose to have their intellectual skills assessed through an individually supervised research-based dissertation or a group-supervised consultancy project or case-based applied research project (B1, B2, B3).

**Practical Skills**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

C1 Apply theoretical knowledge to specific contexts of sustainability practice and management

C2 Demonstrate integrated problem-solving competencies – by defining, contextualising, analysing and evaluating creative solutions to multi-level sustainability problems, and present these solutions effectively to (potential) stakeholders

C3 Plan, design, develop and implement collaborative project work in cross-cultural settings, including demonstrate collaborative competency, sensitivity and responsiveness to diverse cultural contexts

C4 Demonstrate self-awareness and leadership in influencing behavioural and social transformation for sustainability in diverse cultural contexts, including integrate values, ethics and social justice.

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

Students develop practical skills through small group discussions (C1, C2, C3, C4), workshops and seminars (C1, C2, C3, C4), essays and reports (C1, C2, C3, C4), as well as individual and group projects (C1, C2, C3, C4). Modules such as Sustainable Venture Creation (compulsory) and Digital Transformation for Social Good (elective) engage students in actively developing their practical skills through live projects with external organisations that provide valuable feedback from industry and community practice (C1, C2, C3, C4). In addition, capstone options such as consultancy project and applied research project allow students to further develop and enhance practical skills through more substantial project work (C1, C2, C3, C4).

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| <b>Assessment Strategy</b>   |
| Practical skills are assessed through group projects and presentations (C1, C2, C3, C4), individual and reflective reports (C1, C2), oral presentations (C1, C2), and practice-based projects (C1, C2, C3, C4). In the capstone module, students' practical skills are assessed through a dissertation (C1, C2), consultancy project (C1, C2, C3, C4) or applied research project (C1, C2, C3, C4), depending on the student's choice of capstone project type.  |
| <b>Transferable/Key Skills</b>   |
| On completing the programme students should be able to:<br><br>D1 Organise and prioritise problem-based project tasks, including participate effectively and collaboratively in team work<br><br>D2 Demonstrate self-awareness, initiative and responsibility for their own personal and professional development<br><br>D3 Communicate effectively to diverse audiences, through diverse channels and media, including demonstrate ethical sensitivity in multi-cultural contexts.<br><br>D4 Adapt and operate in a different cultural environment.   |
| <b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>   |
| Students have the opportunity to develop transferable/key skills through a variety of learning activities. For example, modules such as Role of Business in Society, and Sustainable Venture Creation, engage students in team work, communication and presentation of findings - both within the module and in interaction with other modules (D1, D3). In addition, seminars and workshops, formative coursework, engagement with external speakers, and specifically designed small group activities encourage students to take ownership of their own personal and professional development, set up their own goals, and self-monitor learning progress (D2). Sensitivity to cultural diversity in context is developed through lectures, case studies, individual and group projects, fieldwork (D3), and (where applicable) Study Abroad opportunities (D4). Students can also develop important transferable skills while undertaking their chosen capstone project (D1, D2, D3). |
| <b>Assessment Strategy</b>   |
| This programme assesses transferable/key skills (D1, D2, D3) indirectly, using a variety of assessment modes, such as case studies, essays and reports, presentations, individual and group projects. Skills D1, D2, D3 and D4 are not independently assessed.   |

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| <b>12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features</b>   |
| <b>Basic structure of the programme</b>  |
| <p><b>Basic Structure</b><br/>Programme Duration: 1 Year 180 CTS (full-time)</p> <p>The Full-Time only provision is to be reviewed after the first two years. This will enable evaluation of full-time delivery, to also ascertain the most effective ways in which part-time and/or distance learning could be introduced in the Programme in the longer term. Part time and distance learning would enable the growing number of those with practical and professional experience in sustainability management to have access to this programme as well.</p> |

## **Modules & Credit Arrangements**

The course is taught through compulsory modules (totalling 100 credits), elective modules (totalling 20 credits), and one compulsory capstone module (60 credits). In the capstone module, students can choose between a research-based dissertation, a consultancy project with an external organisation (NUBS partner), and a case-based applied research project.

The Programme is structured to provide a consistent and progressive student learning journey, in three key steps:

### **Semester 1 – Key Sustainability Contexts for Managing Organisations**

This part consists of 60 credits of compulsory modules. In accordance with QAA benchmarks, it lays the foundations of primary, generalist knowledge and skills required for managing sustainability in organisations. It provides insights into the wider contexts of sustainable development and consumer behaviours, basic principles of accounting for / financing sustainability goals, elements of innovative entrepreneurship for sustainability, as well as basic research skills.

### **Semester 2 – Designing and Implementing Sustainable Organisations**

This part comprises 40 credits of compulsory modules and 20 credits of elective modules. The compulsory part builds on the foundational knowledge and skills developed at Step 1, allowing students to develop creative solutions for sustainable business models, and to integrate their understanding of sustainability in organisations with social transformation and ecological sustainability goals. In particular, the “Role of Business in Society” module (NBS8513) builds on macro-level perspectives discussed in Semester 1 to derive normative recommendations for business (organisations) and individual leadership, together with the Sustainability Management and the Natural Environment module (NBS8650), which provides focus on the strategic management of sustainable business models. In addition, electives allow students to explore in more depth specific organisational functions and operations, and/or particular aspects of sustainability management. Each year, the approved list of electives will vary depending on staff availability, and may include electives offered in other Schools and/or Faculties at Newcastle University and/or at partner institutions.

### **Semester 3 – Synoptic, Inter-disciplinary, Independent Learning (Semester 3)**

During Semester 3 students have the opportunity to pursue their own learning interests through a major research project delivered within a capstone module. The structure of this module is flexible and allows students to choose one of three different options: (a) individual research project (research-based dissertation with one-on-one supervision); (b) consultancy project (research and/or policy development to address a real-life problem in collaboration with a host organisation / external partner); or (c) applied research project (case study based research of a particular organisation and/or aspect of sustainability management, guided by group supervision).

This curriculum is also supported by a programme of extra-curricular activities delivered by Newcastle University Business School (NUBS) and designed to inform, guide and engage students in planning for Sustainability (Management) Careers. This programme of extra-curricular activities will be supported as part of the School’s Sustainability Forum (a year-long programme of engagement events and activities offered to NUBS students and promoted through the NUBS Sustainability Forum Community in Canvas).

### **Optional international experience – following successful completion of taught elements**

Following the completion of all taught elements of the programme, registrants will have the option to undertake one additional semester of study with an existing NUBS partner institution. The exchange period will begin in late September/early October (depending on the destination institution) following the submission of the dissertation. Students participating in an exchange will be instructed to select partner modules which will add value to their NUBS degree, focussing on subjects that will enhance their graduate employability prospects.

**Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)**

Key features of the programme include:

- Focus on understanding the role of organisations in society and the growing importance placed on sustainable business practices (this focus directs the student's learning journey)
- Focus on integrating different organisational functions to contribute to more sustainable business models: by reviewing and reforming all key functions of a productive organisation (accounting, finance, strategic management and international business, human resource management, marketing and consumer behaviour, operations and supply chain management, entrepreneurship and innovation) and integrating them for the strategic pursuit of global sustainability goals, students have the opportunity to develop innovative solutions for sustainable transitions in a range of streams within their (potential) workplace
- Core modules that reflect the key sustainability issues explored within and across all the disciplines supported by all of NUBS' research communities
- Integrated teaching of foundational research skills (Management Inquiry and Analysis module) in combination with workshops on Sustainability-specific research methods and theories (e.g. systems theory, complexity theory) in the capstone module, thus channelling research methodology teaching expertise towards the multi, inter and transdisciplinary approaches required for sustainability research; and
- Three capstone project options enhancing diversity projects in sustainability research and practice (research-based dissertation, consultancy project, applied research project).

The programme also offers participants the opportunity to enhance their graduate employment prospects by improving their intercultural understanding and communication skills by offering an optional semester exchange abroad at one of NUBS' existing partner institutions.

**Programme regulations (link to on-line version)**

[5499 5500 Programme Regulations 24/25](#)

**13 Support for Student Learning**

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

**14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

*Accreditation reports*

None

*Additional mechanisms*

None

**15 Regulation of assessment**

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.

## Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

| Module  | Type       | Intended Learning Outcomes |         |            |         |
|---|------------|----------------------------|---------|------------|---------|
|   |            | A                          | B       | C          | D       |
| NBS8652 (Pol Econ <sup>i</sup> ), S1, 20 cdts | Compulsory | 1, 2, 3                    | 1, 2, 3 | 1, 2       | 2       |
| NBS8657 (F&A <sup>ii</sup> ), S1&2, 20 cdts   | Compulsory | 1, 2, 3                    | 1, 2, 3 | 1, 2, 4    | 2, 3    |
| NBS8618 <sup>iii</sup> , S1&2, 20 cdts        | Compulsory | 1, 2, 3                    | 1, 2, 3 | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 1, 2, 3 |
| NBS8527 <sup>iv</sup> , S1, 10 cdts           | Compulsory | 1, 2, 3                    | 1, 2, 3 | 1, 2, 4    | 1, 2, 3 |
| NBS8646 (MIA <sup>v</sup> ), S1, 10 cdts      | Compulsory | 4                          | 2, 3    | 2, 4       | 1, 2, 3 |
| NBS8650 <sup>vi</sup> , S2, 10 cdts           | Compulsory | 1, 2, 3                    | 1, 2, 3 | 1, 2, 4    | 2, 3    |
| NBS8513 <sup>vii</sup> , S2, 10 cdts          | Compulsory | 1, 3                       | 1, 2, 3 | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 1, 2, 3 |
| NBS8660 <sup>viii</sup> , S3, 60 cdts         | Compulsory | 1, 2, 3, 4                 | 1, 2, 3 | 1, 2, 4    | 2, 3    |
|   |            |                            |         |            |         |
| NBS8661 (HRM <sup>ix</sup> ), S2, 10 cdts     | Optional   | 1, 2, 3                    | 1, 2, 3 | 1, 2, 4    | 1, 2, 3 |
| NBS8342 <sup>x</sup> , S2, 10 cdts            | Optional   | 1, 2, 3                    | 1, 2, 3 | 1, 2, 4    | 1, 2, 3 |
| NBS8628 <sup>xi</sup> , S2, 10 cdts           | Optional   | 1, 2, 3                    | 1, 2, 3 | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 1, 2, 3 |
| NBS8000 <sup>xii</sup> , S4                   | Optional   | 5                          |         |            | 4       |

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<sup>i</sup> Political Economy of Sustainable Development (NEW)

<sup>ii</sup> Finance and Accounting for Sustainability (NEW)

<sup>iii</sup> Sustainable Venture Creation

<sup>iv</sup> Marketing Ethics, Critical Consumption and Corporate Social Responsibility

<sup>v</sup> Management Inquiry and Analysis (NEW)

<sup>vi</sup> Sustainability Management and the Natural Environment

<sup>vii</sup> Role of Business in Society – Issues and Challenges

<sup>viii</sup> Advanced Sustainability Management Project (capstone module) (NEW)

<sup>ix</sup> Sustainable Work, Employment and Human Resource Management (NEW)

<sup>x</sup> Sustainable Supply Chain Management

<sup>xi</sup> Digital Transformation for Social Good

<sup>xii</sup> Business School PGT Mobility