



Microcredential Specification

Key Information			
Course title	PMM160-MC Environmental sustainability for project management		
Level	7	Credit value	15
Federation member	RHUL	Notional study hours and duration of course	150 hours
Academic subject expert	Professor Katie Willis		
Course co-author (where applicable)			

Rationale for the course

In order to manage projects to enhance sustainability, students need to understand how 'sustainability' as a concept has developed, and how different dimensions of sustainability may be in tension. This course provides students with this information and develops understanding through a focus on environmental aspects of sustainability. It gives students a grounding in key environmental issues, approaches to addressing those issues and the challenges of including environmental sustainability goals in organizational activity.

Aims of the course

This course considers the contested nature of sustainability, focusing on environmental aspects. It provides students with an understanding of key environmental issues and draws on case studies to demonstrate the challenges of addressing those issues in public, private and third sector organisations.

1. To provide an overview of the concept of sustainability, its diversity and its measurement
2. To enable students to understand approaches to sustainability at different scales
3. To explore the environmental dimensions of sustainability

To consider the challenges of implementing environmentally-sustainable strategies

Topics covered in this course:

1. Introduction to sustainability
2. Sustainability, trade-offs and the triple bottom line
3. Sustainable development
4. Climate change and the concept of the Anthropocene
5. Environmental justice
6. Biodiversity
7. Air and water pollution
8. Ecological and carbon footprints
9. Circular economy
10. Greening and greenwashing

The topics covered may be revised to ensure currency and relevance. Participant will be advised of any changes in advance of their study.

Learning outcomes for the course

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the contested nature of the concept of sustainability, its diversity and its measurement
- Critically evaluate approaches to sustainability at different scales
- Describe and explain the environmental dimensions of sustainability
- Critically evaluate the implementation of environmentally-sustainable strategies

Learning and Teaching Strategy and Methods

The learning and teaching strategy for this course reflects the flexible, self-paced model required for microcredentials, ensuring that all students can progress in a structured yet adaptable way, regardless of their location, background or prior experience of online learning.

The course is designed by subject specialists and supported by expert learning designers and online education teams to ensure that learning activities, digital media and assessment are aligned to the intended learning outcomes.

A structured sequence is embedded into every course, following a coherent approach to content acquisition, active learning, feedback and evaluation.

- Content introduces and explains core concepts through a blend of video and digital reading.
- Activity enables students to apply learning through practice-based, professional and reflective tasks.
- Feedback is provided through automated quizzes, model responses and guidance from the AI study assistant.
- Evaluation encourages learners to reflect on their progress and identify next steps in their learning journey.

This approach ensures continuity throughout the ten modules and supports students in building confidence, competence and independence progressively across the course.

Teaching methods

The following teaching methods are integrated into the course design:

- Video-based guidance delivering structured explanations of key ideas with visual aids

- Interactive learning activities enabling knowledge application to authentic workplace scenarios
- Self-directed independent learning through guided readings, online library exploration and personal research
- Frequent formative assessment including knowledge checks, worked examples and reflective questions to reinforce understanding and skills development
- AI-supported learning with 24/7 access to the AI study assistant for clarification, feedback and study support at the point of need
- Progress monitoring and reflection helping students assess achievement, review understanding and plan further study

Support for learning

Although this course does not include scheduled live teaching, students are never studying alone. The learning platform includes tools to track progress, submit assessments and access feedback, while the Online Library provides curated digital resources to enhance academic skills and knowledge

Clear guidance is provided to help students manage their study time, structure weekly goals and maintain consistency throughout the learning journey. Recommendations for integrating study into personal and professional schedules are included in the induction resources, promoting resilience, motivation and successful completion.

Assessment strategy, assessment methods

This course uses a practical assessment approach that helps you show both your understanding of key ideas and your ability to apply them to real business situations. You will complete a coursework task that test how well you can use core theories and analytical techniques. This assessment focuses on developing real professional skills, such as interpreting business data, solving operational or financial problems, and explaining your decisions clearly using appropriate frameworks. This approach looks at your abilities as a whole—how you connect theory with practice—while also helping you build your analytical, critical-thinking, and communication skills over time. A mark of 50% is required to pass the assessment.

The assessment design is flexible and supports self-paced learning. For coursework tasks, students can choose from a range of assessment windows and submit their work at the point that best fits their personal schedule and study plans. This flexibility allows you to manage your learning in a way that suits your circumstances, while still meeting the course's academic requirements. It also encourages you to plan your time effectively and engage with the material at a pace that supports deeper understanding.

Assessment Elements

1. Coursework (100% weighting)
 - Students are required to apply the concepts and techniques learned in the course to a realistic business scenario.
 - The assessment is designed to develop your global employability skills.
 - The coursework is directly aligned with the course's learning outcomes, ensuring you are assessed on the knowledge, skills, and competencies you are expected to achieve.

Learning resources

This course is structured into ten modules, designed to support flexible self-paced study and the practical application of knowledge to professional contexts.

The learning resources are curated to enable both directed learning and independent study, providing opportunities to acquire new knowledge, apply concepts in realistic scenarios, receive feedback and evaluate progress throughout the course

Each course follows a consistent learning sequence, incorporating a blend of the following resource types:

Video lessons

Concise explainer videos introduce key concepts and practical methods. Presenters utilise visual aids such as slides and screen demonstrations to enhance understanding and maintain clarity.

Interactive and practical activities

Learning activities provide opportunities to apply concepts to real-world and workplace scenarios. These include worked examples, reflective tasks and application-based exercises designed to build confidence and professional competence as you progress

Quizzes and knowledge checks

Automated quizzes provide rapid feedback to support mastery of key ideas. These may include multiple-choice questions, worked solution examples or feedback from the AI study assistant.

Quizzes are generally used formatively to reinforce learning, but some may contribute to assessment if completed under appropriate conditions.

AI-supported learning

A 24/7 AI study assistant is available throughout the course to provide guidance, help learners reflect on progress, clarify concepts and support completion of designated activities.

Self-evaluation tools

Regular opportunities are provided for learners to monitor progress, reflect on achievements and identify areas requiring further study, ensuring continuous learning and improvement

Project-based learning

Each learner develops a professional-quality project linked to a realistic scenario. This supports the development of globally relevant employability skills, including communication, digital capability, problem-solving and adaptability

E-resources and library access

All students receive full access to the University of London Online Library and VLE resources. Directed reading and recommended online sources are integrated into each course, supporting further research, information-literacy development and independent study

Materials are provided in accessible digital formats suitable for study across multiple devices. Learners are encouraged to extend their engagement with topics of interest through wider reading and exploration of online library holdings.

Study expectations

Courses include indicative timings to support planning and time management, with a total study commitment of approximately 150 hours for the full course. Learners may adjust weekly effort to suit their individual needs and availability whilst progressing through courses in the recommended learning sequence

Reading list

- Acosta, A. 'Living well: ideas for reinventing the future', *Third World Quarterly* 38(12) 2017, pp.2600–16.
- Ambec, S., M.A. Cohen, S. Elgie et al. 'The Porter hypothesis at 20. Can environmental regulation enhance innovation and competitiveness?', Discussion paper, *Resources for the Future* 2011.
- Amuzu, D. 'Environmental injustice of informal e-waste recycling in Agbogbloshie-Accra: urban political ecology perspective', *Local Environment* 23(6) 2018, pp.603–18.
- Cotton, M. (2018) 'Environmental justice as scalar parity: lessons from nuclear waste management', *Social Justice Research* 31 2018, pp.238–59.

- Easterly, W. 'The trouble with the Sustainable Development Goals', *Current History* 114(775) 2015, pp.322–24.
- Ekins, P. and D. Zhengelis 'The costs and benefits of environmental sustainability', *Sustainability Science* 16 2021, pp.949–65.
- Escrig-Olmedo, E., M.Á Fernández-Izquierdo, I. Ferrero-Ferrero et al. 'Rating the raters: evaluating how ESG rating agencies integrate sustainability principles', *Sustainability* 11(3) 2019, p.915.
- Gast, J., K. Gundolf and B. Cesinger (2017) 'Doing business in a green way: a systematic review of the ecological sustainability entrepreneurship literature and future research directions', *Journal of Cleaner Production* 147 (20) 2017, pp.44–56.
- Grima, N., L. Ringhofer, S.J. Singh et al. 'Mainstreaming biodiversity in development practice: Can the concept of PES deliver?', *Progress in Development Studies* 17(4) 2017, pp.267–81.
- Hepburn, S.J. (2013) 'In Patagonia (clothing): a complicated greenness', *Fashion Theory* 17(5) 2013, pp.623–46.
- Jänicke, M. 'Ecological modernisation: new perspectives', *Journal of Cleaner Production* 16 2008, pp.557–65.
- Jóhannesson, S.E., J. Heinonen and B. Davíðsdóttir 'Data accuracy in Ecological Footprint's carbon footprint', *Ecological Indicators* 111 2017.
- Kamoto J, G. Clarkson, P. Dorward et al. 'Doing more harm than good? Community based natural resource management and the neglect of local institutions in policy development', *Land Use Policy* 35 2013, pp.293–301.
- Korhonen, J., A. Honkasalo and J. Sepälä 'Circular economy: the concept and its limits', *Ecological Economics* 143 2018, pp.37–46.
- Lewis, S.L. and M. Maslin *The human planet: how we created the Anthropocene*. (London: Pelican 2019) pp.3–16.
- Miller T.R., B.A. Minter and L.-C. Malan 'The new conservation debate: the view from practical ethics', *Biological Conservation* 144 2011, pp.948–57.
- Oluwole, O., A. Godson, A. Ganiyu et al. (2013) 'Effect of stove intervention on household air pollution and the respiratory health of women and children in rural Nigeria', *Air Quality, Atmosphere & Health* 6 2013, pp.553–61.
- Peterson St-Laurent, G. S. Hagerman and G. Hoberg (2017) 'Barriers to the development of foreign carbon offsetting: insights from British Columbia, Canada', *Journal of Environmental Management* 203 2017, pp.208–17.
- Purvis, P., Y. Mao and D. Robinson 'Three pillars of sustainability: in search of conceptual origins', *Sustainability Science* 14 2018, pp.681–95.
- Raworth, K. 'A doughnut for the Anthropocene: humanity's compass in the 21st century', *The Lancet Planetary Health* 1(2) 2017, pp. E48-49.
- Redclift, M. 'Sustainable development' in Desai, V. and R. Potter (eds) *The companion to development studies*. (London: Routledge, 2014) 3rd edn, pp.333–36.
- Robertson, M. 'What is sustainability' in Robertson, M. (ed) *Sustainability: principles and practice*. (London: Earthscan, 2021) 3rd edn.
- Schoolm, M. and M. Cox 'Collaboration, adaptation and scaling: perspectives on environmental governance for sustainability', *Sustainability* 10(3) 2018, p.679.
- Siano, A., A. Vollero, F. Conte et al. "More than words": expanding the taxonomy of greenwashing after the Volkswagen scandal', *Journal of Business Research* 71 2017, pp.27–37.
- Szabo, S. & J. Webster 'Perceived greenwashing: the effects of green marketing on environmental and product perceptions', *Journal of Business Ethics* 171 2021, pp.719–39.
- Willis, K. 'Viewpoint: international development planning and the sustainable development goals', *International Development Planning Review* 38(2) 2016, pp.105–11.
- Zhu, L., Y. Hao, Z.-N. Lu et al. 'Do economic activities cause air pollution? Evidence from China's major cities', *Sustainable Cities and Society* 49 2019, p.101593.

Precise reading from this material will be specified as part of the course.

Additional recommended reading and other references will be available in the VLE.