

Embedding Sustainability into the Business and Management Curriculum

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Embedding sustainability into the SBM curriculum

Nov 2019 review by Professor Perri 6 of environmental sustainability across the SBM curriculum

- ‘very modest coverage of environmental sustainability issues, especially in compulsory modules’, and highlighted the paucity in Y1 modules
- Noted two UG modules that substantively examined the environment: Corporations and Social Responsibility (BUS237) and Global Supply Chains (BUS326) which focuses on sustainability in supply chains and environmental certification schemes

Embedding sustainability into BSc Business Management

Sustainability is being mapped and developed in the BSc Business Management Transformation Project, led by Dr Patrick McGurk

2020/21 was the first major roll-out of the (then) Y1 Transformation Project: new modules, new modes of assessment, new cohort teaching

The Transformation Project is now being developed for Y2 and into Y3

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Year	Semester A	Semester B
1	Current Challenges in Business and Management I (BUS156)* Business and Society (BUS107)*	Current Challenges in Business and Management II (BUS157)*
2	Corporate Strategy and Environmental Change (BUS2XX)*	Corporations and Social Responsibility (BUS237) Responsible Leadership (BUS243)
3	Global Supply Chains (BUS326)*	Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Project (BUS364)?

*Compulsory module

YEAR ONE SUSTAINABILITY CONTENT

SEMESTER A

BUS107 Business and Society [compulsory]

- Examine the role of the corporation and stakeholders, explicitly naming 'nature' as a stakeholder
- Identify the uniqueness of capitalism's relationship to nature, contrasting with other belief systems (e.g. the Assisi Declaration where stewardship, not ownership is vital)
- Examine impact of core business operations (e.g. marketing), sectors (e.g. fast fashion), strategies (e.g. planned obsolescence), governance structures (e.g. shareholder value) on sustainability

BUS156 Current Challenges in Business and Management I [compulsory]

- To “open the eyes” of students to the context of the global challenges business contributes to producing and might help to resolve
- Problem-based teaching: real-world, shifting dynamics where context and differentiation matter; and cumulative learning of skills
- 3-week research project cycles on COVID-19 themed by SBM ethos: sustainability, social justice, good governance – the final challenge threaded together all three areas, foregrounding governance-change as imperative for sustainable development

Challenge One: Sustainability in the Age of Covid-19

Group task:

- Identify three or more environmental factors contributing to the cause and spread of C19?
- Identify three or more environmental effects of C19 on business and the economy?
- Explain whether you see each factor as a short, medium or long term causes/ effects? Are these factors socially positive/negative/ neutral? What can be done about them?
- Present: Design a Table in OneNote to present this analysis – agree in your group as to how you will order/ prioritise and explain the factors

YEAR TWO LEARNING OUTCOMES

SEMESTER A

BUS2XX Corporate Strategy and Environmental Change [compulsory]

1. Explain climate emergency and biodiversity loss, assess climate projections, and evaluate limitations.
2. Identify and critique capitalism's relationship with nature in relation to the Anthropocene.
3. Critically examine corporate strategies for the linear economy based on nature as an expendable resource.
4. Compare and contrast policy approaches to systemic change and apply these to corporate strategies.

SEMESTER B

BUS237 Corporations and Social Responsibility

1. Discuss ethical theories relevant to CSR and sustainability issues impacting the business world.
2. Recognize an ethical dilemma and identify an ethical approach to resolve it.
3. Interpret facts about climate change and evaluate the veracity of corporate social reporting.

BUS2XX: Corporate Strategy and Environmental Change

Module Aims

1. Deepen knowledge from Y1 and provide pathways to specialise in Y3 by enabling students to appraise the context and contours of environment change and its impact on corporate strategies.
2. Increase students' environmental intellectual agility and foster their ability to initiate and respond to change, with a view to sustainability, social justice, and good governance.
3. Enable students to understand how environmental change links to corporate strategy by highlighting the impact of corporate practices in the linear economy on nature.
4. Enable students to develop innovative strategic thinking linked to emerging political agendas, e.g. circular economy, degrowth, Green New Deal, climate change commitments in different countries, etc. Students will prepare for a future world characterised by rapid environmental change and profound political and socio-economic effects.

BUS326: Global Supply Chains

Module Content in 2020/21

Supply chain capitalism, nature and Covid-19

What are global supply chains? What is their history? (I.e. from the colonial to the new international division of labour) How do global supply chains work? (I.e. perspectives from supply chain management and political economy)

Analysis of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of global supply chains, tracing natural resource industries through to retail:

- Just-in-time salad? Giant supermarkets and fresh fruit and vegetables GSC
- Green coffee? Large processors and the coffee GSC
- Clean clothes? Branded manufactures and the fast fashion GSC
- Fair phones? Mining coltan and assembling phones GSCs

Is contemporary business sustainable?

- Sustainability is embedded in the curriculum as **the** problem for business as it has been and continues to be practiced and governed
- Foregrounding this issue serves to enable students to think creatively at the same time as analytically, imparting urgency and assigning responsibility for change to a discipline that is often considered 'merely' instrumental or academically irrelevant
- It further serves to put our students in the position to not fear the 'expertise' that has preceded them, since this has led to unsustainable practices to which new solutions need to be found