



UK

## SYLLABUS 2025-2026

### Change Management for Sustainability

#### MODULE SPECIFICATION

Module Code	2526_STG_2_EN_009
Campus	Oxford
Department(s)	Strategy and Entrepreneurship
Level / Semester	Masters Year 1 (M1); Equivalent to FHEQ level 7 Semester 07
Language of Instruction	English
Teaching Method	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-person (face-to-face) <input type="checkbox"/> Distance learning (live online) <input type="checkbox"/> e-Learning (asynchronous) <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid: _____
Pre-requisite(s)?	Prior knowledge of strategic management and change management topics
ECTS <i>Reminder: 1 ECTS = between 20 and 30hr- student workload</i>	4
Equivalent FHEQ credits	8
Study Hours	100 hours which comprise of 28 directed learning and 72 independent learning/assessment hours

#### MODULE DESCRIPTION

Module Aims	This module offers a critical exploration of the intricate relationship between corporate strategy and the integration of socially responsible and sustainable values. It examines the profound organisational shifts required, including changes to core identity, processes, and ingrained power structures. The module investigates the complex challenges leaders face in driving systemic change, from internal inertia to external institutional contexts. Students will engage with advanced
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	theoretical frameworks and real-world case studies to develop a sophisticated understanding of the multifaceted implications for the private sector. The curriculum is designed to foster a deep, analytical understanding of organisational transformation toward sustainability.
<b>Teaching Arrangement</b>	This module combines two pedagogical approaches: classical pedagogy (lecture mode) and flipped pedagogy. The latter requires a high level of class participation and engagement on the part of students, who are encouraged to pursue independent learning and conduct their own research during and outside class sessions in order to develop and demonstrate their mastery of the theoretical content. The module invites students to analyse a change initiative in an organisation of their choice, ideally one in which they work, have worked or are considering working in.
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	By the end of this module, students should be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Critically appraise the multifaceted challenges involved in strategically managing sustainability within complex organisational structures.</li> <li>2. Formulate an in-depth analysis of an organisation's capacity to address sustainability issues, identifying and evaluating its inherent strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>3. Synthesise a comprehensive change initiative grounded in a rigorous organisational diagnosis of sustainability challenges.</li> <li>4. Construct and critically evaluate a flexible and agile implementation strategy for organisational change, incorporating principles of circularity.</li> <li>5. Evaluate the dynamics and influence of key stakeholders within the change process and their impact on project outcomes.</li> <li>6. Develop and apply a robust framework for measuring and critically evaluating the success factors of a strategic change initiative.</li> </ol>
<b>Competency Goals*</b> <i>(Knowledge, expertise and interpersonal skills)</i>	PGE_M_CG01 - To be equipped with efficient business skills
	PGE_M_CG02 - To be entrepreneurially-minded
	PGE_M_CG03 - To be open to cross-cultural perspectives
<b>Alignment with Programme Learning Goals*</b>	PGE_M_CG05_LO01 - To understand the concepts of sustainable development and ethics and what is at stake for the organisation
	PGE_M_CG05_LO01_I02 - To be aware of the responsibility of the firm towards its employees and society
	PGE_M_CG02_LO01 - To understand the environment of a company whatever the activity sector

*Last reviewed: 11/09/2025*

## SESSION TOPICS / MODULE SCHEDULE

(Please note, a session/sequence may be more than one scheduled class)

### Session 1: Introduction to the Concept of Sustainable Change

#### Content:

- Key challenges of sustainable change
- Business case for sustainability in modern organisations
- Sustainability, corporate social responsibility, business ethics, etc.
- Why sustainability matters
- Tensions surrounding corporate sustainability
- Shifting societal, technological, and regulatory landscapes
  - Implications for leading sustainable change

#### References:

- Henderson, R., Gulati, R. and Tushman, M. (eds.) (2015) *Leading sustainable change: An organizational perspective*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press. (Foreword, Chapters 1 and 2)
- Further reading:
  - Richardson, K., Renda, A., Alkemade, F., Walz, R., Simonsson, J., Grabbe, H., Świeboda, P., Balland, P.-A., et al. (2024) *Why Europe needs a systemic R&I policy: Redefining competitiveness for long-term sustainability*. rep. European Commission - Expert Group on the Economic and Societal Impact of Research and Innovation (ESIR), pp. 1–34.
  - Strand, R. (2024) 'Global sustainability frontrunners: Lessons from the Nordics', *California Management Review*, 66(3), pp. 5-26. doi:10.1177/00081256241234709.
  - Haski-Leventhal, D., Korschun, D. and Linnenluecke, M. (2021) *Sustainability is no longer enough: How corporations are becoming the new climate activists*, *California Management Review*. Available at: <https://cmr.berkeley.edu/2021/11/sustainability-is-no-longer-enough/>.

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### Session 2: Scenario Analysis – Will AI Help or Hurt Sustainability?

#### Content:

- Form 2 (or more) groups with different (and at times conflicting) interests regarding the use of AI by corporations and its implications for sustainability
  - Groups can include corporate representatives, legislators, NGOs, etc.
  - During the session: each group will work to develop their arguments and stances
    - Groups present their perspectives with supporting evidence and answer concerns from other stakeholders
  - Session will end with a conclusion and reflection on the topics discussed

#### References:

- (2024) *AI and sustainability*, *SDSN Northern Europe*. Available at: <https://www.unsdsn-ne.org/en/news/ai-and-sustainability>.
- Winston, A. (2024) *Will AI help or hurt sustainability? Yes*, *MIT Sloan Management Review*. Available at: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/will-ai-help-or-hurt-sustainability-yes/>.
- Zewe, A. (2025) *Explained: Generative AI's environmental impact*, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*. Available at: <https://news.mit.edu/2025/explained-generative-ai-environmental->

*Last reviewed: 11/09/2025*

impact-0117.

- Stano, S. and Munoz, J.M. (2024) *3 ways to leverage A.I. for efficient energy management*, *California Management Review*. Available at: <https://cmr.berkeley.edu/2024/11/3-ways-to-leverage-a-i-for-efficient-energy-management/>.
- Stackpole, B. (2025) *AI has high data center energy costs – but there are solutions*, *MIT Sloan*. Available at: <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/ai-has-high-data-center-energy-costs-there-are-solutions>.

### Session 3: Shifting Sustainability from a Peripheral Concern to the Core of Business Strategy and Operations

#### Content:

- How organisational structures and strategy accelerate or hinder sustainability
- Organisational learning and responsible innovation for sustainability
- Circular business model
- A process model to sustainability

#### References:

- Henderson, R., Gulati, R. and Tushman, M. (eds.) (2015) *Leading sustainable change: An organizational perspective*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press. (Chapters 3-5)
- Further reading:
  - Genus, A. and Stirling, A. (2018) 'Collingridge and the dilemma of control: Towards responsible and accountable innovation', *Research Policy*, 47(1), pp. 61-69. doi:10.1016/j.respol.2017.09.012.
  - De Marchi, V. (2012) 'Environmental innovation and R&D cooperation: Empirical evidence from Spanish manufacturing firms', *Research Policy*, 41(3) pp. 614-623. doi:10.1016/j.respol.2011.10.002.
  - Nickisch, C. (2018) 'McKinsey's head on why corporate sustainability efforts are falling short', *HBR IdeaCast*. Podcast. Available at: <https://hbr.org/podcast/2018/03/mckinseys-head-on-why-corporate-sustainability-efforts-are-falling-short>.
  - Jay, J., Isaacs, K. and Nguyen, H.L. (2025) *Getting strategic about sustainability: Use these four lenses to focus on what matters*, *Harvard Business Review*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2025/01/getting-strategic-about-sustainability>.
  - Jørgensen, S. and Pedersen, L.J.T. (2018) 'A process model for sustainable business model innovation', in *Restart sustainable business model innovation*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 183–192.
  - Scherer, A.G. and Voegtlin, C. (2020) 'Corporate governance for responsible innovation: Approaches to corporate governance and their implications for sustainable development', *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 34(2), pp. 182-208. doi:10.5465/amp.2017.0175.
  - Matoh, S., Russell, S.V., Roelich, K. and Randles, S. (2024) 'Circular business model innovation and cognitive framing: Addressing the “missing micro” ', *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 33(8), pp. 8656-8667. doi:10.1002/bse.3938.

### Session 4: Explaining the Role of Organisational Identity in Sustainability and How Senior Teams Manage This Dynamic During Change

#### Content:

- Organisational identity

*Last reviewed: 11/09/2025*

- Creating a sustainable organisational identity
- Active inertia in organisations and implications for leading sustainability
- Ethical closure and silence
- Strategic renewal and proactive punctuated change

*References:*

- Henderson, R., Gulati, R. and Tushman, M. (eds.) (2015) *Leading sustainable change: An organizational perspective*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press. (Chapters 6-10)
- Further reading:
  - Kyrdoda, Y., Balzano, M. and Vianelli, D. (2025) 'The formation of a sustainable organizational identity: Insights from Brazilian coffee products', *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 34(1), pp. 1-18. doi:10.1002/bse.3975.
  - Pena, C.J. and Mazutis, D. (2024) 'Organizational identity and corporate sustainability: A systematic literature review', *Academy of Management*, 2024(1). doi:10.5465/AMPROC.2024.17348abstract.
  - Kjærgaard, A. and Morsing, M. (2018) 'Organizational identity and integration of sustainable development: A micro-level study of ethical closure and silence', Paper presented at EGOS, Tallinn, Estonia, 05/07/2018 - 07/07/2018.

Session 5: Continuous Assessment 1

*Content:*

- Present in group format a critical analysis of a selected corporation and how its journey towards sustainability has evolved over time
  - Use of sustainability reports published by corporations can be a good starting point
  - Lecturer is free to adjust the topics required in each report as deemed necessary
  - Format: 10 to 15-minute presentation, including Q&A

Session 6: Sustainability Measurement and Sustainable Performance

*Content:*

- Sustainability and business performance: metrics
- Overselling sustainability
- Current practices
- Areas of improvement

*References:*

- Funk, K. (2003) *Sustainability and performance*, MIT Sloan Management Review. Available at: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/sustainability-and-performance/>.
- Eckert, N.B., Kastbjerg, C. and Lundberg, A. (2024) *Tapping into the hidden consumer demand for sustainability*. Webinar. MIT Sloan Management Review. Available at: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/video/tapping-into-the-hidden-consumer-demand-for-sustainability/>.
- (n.d.) *Corporate sustainable reporting*, UN Environment Programme. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/resource-efficiency/what-we-do/responsible-industry/corporate-sustainability>.
- Pucker, K.P. (2021) *Overselling sustainability report: We're confusing output with impact*, Harvard Business Review. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2021/05/overselling-sustainability-reporting>.
- Whelan, T., Zappa, B., Zeidan, R. and Fishbein, G. (2017) *How to quantify sustainability's impact on your bottom line*, Harvard Business Review. Available at:

<https://hbr.org/2017/09/how-to-quantify-sustainabilitys-impact-on-your-bottom-line>.

- (2023) *Connect your sustainability goals to your business performance*, *Harvard Business Review*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/sponsored/2023/01/connect-your-sustainability-goals-to-your-business-performance>.
- Erbetta, F., Bruno, C. and Priovano, C. (2022) 'Corporate sustainability and performance: An efficiency perspective', *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 32(6), pp. 2649-2661. doi:10.1002/bse.3262.

## Session 7: Discussion on How Individual Firms Can Lead Broader Changes in Their Industries and Societies

### Content:

- Complexities and ambiguities in goals
- Multiplier firms, interorganisational collaborations, and efficiency
- Common grounds and consensus management
- Systemic ambiguity
- Transition towards sustainability
- Sustainability as an organisational and institutional change

### References:

- Henderson, R., Gulati, R. and Tushman, M. (eds.) (2015) *Leading sustainable change: An organizational perspective*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press. (Chapters 11-13)
- Further reading:
  - Williams, A., Whiteman, G. and Parker, J.N. (2019) 'Backstage interorganizational collaboration: Corporate endorsement of the sustainable development goals', *Academy of Management*, 5(4), pp. 367-395. doi:10.5465/amd.2018.0154.
  - Schöggel, J.-P., Stumpf, L. and Baumgartner, R.J. (2023) 'The role of interorganizational collaboration and digital technologies in the implementation of circular economy practices – Empirical evidence from manufacturing firms', *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 33(3), pp. 2225-2249. doi:10.1002/bse.3593.
  - Vurro, C., Romito, S., Costanzo, L.A., Ghobadian, A. and Russo, A. (2023) 'Alliance management capabilities in sustainability-oriented collaboration: Problematization and new research directions', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 26(1), pp. 8-33. doi:10.1111/ijmr.12346.
  - Kiron, D., Kruschwitz, N., Haanaes, K., Reeves, M. Fuisz-Kehrbach, S.-K. and Kell, G. (2015) *Joining forces: Collaboration and leadership for sustainability*, *MIT Sloan Management Review*. Available at: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/projects/joining-forces/>.
  - Consoli, D., Costantini, V. and Paglialunga, E. (2023) 'We're in this together: Sustainable energy and economic competitiveness in the EU', *Research Policy*, 52(1). doi:10.1016/j.respol.2022.104644.

## Session 8: Continuous Assessment 2

### Content:

- Case analysis:
  - Students work in groups on a given case study in class and will be asked to develop their arguments with sufficient evidence
    - Each group will present their arguments and receive feedback from their peers and lecturer

- Cases will be assigned randomly and prior to the session to give students enough time to reflect
- Clear guidance should be provided by the lecturer on key assessment metrics (cohesiveness, comprehensiveness, use of supporting data, aesthetics, etc.)

### Session 9: Final Assessment

#### *Content:*

- Role play
  - Format: 20 minutes of scripted oral presentation (+10 minutes of comments/questions/answers, if time allows)
  - Assignment: deliver a 20-minute scripted presentation
    - Scenario will consist of 1+ meetings involving key players (executive and/or non-executive managers of the organisation, consultants, stakeholder representatives, etc.) in a real/fictitious change initiative for sustainability
    - Students will be asked to take on different roles within their group (e.g. consultants, project leader, CEO, HR director, marketing director, NGO representative, etc.) and lead a discussion on the change project
      - During the discussion: players will consider each other's interests, bringing out information, doubts, questions, and/or new proposals
        - Aim: convince people of the rigour and relevance of the project, as well as the interest and feasibility of the recommendations
  - Recommended protocol:
    - Plan a narrator role for 1 members of the group (takes charge of the introduction, conclusion, and regular updates on the theoretical implications of the scenario)
      - Meeting introduction (by narrator): briefly describe the organisational context (industrial sector, activities, size, situation, etc.)
        - Specify the type of development envisioned and briefly describe everyone's role in the meeting
      - Conclusion (by narrator): summarise the key points of the meeting, thank the participants, and briefly describe the next step(s)
    - Part 1: Discussion on the sustainability initiative and development options
      - What needs to be changed?
      - How is it going to change?
    - Part 2: Implementation phase
      - Evaluate the organisation's performance and conduct a critical analysis of the development strategy
        - Aim: consider the elements that may constrain/facilitate the development plan
      - Develop a critical analysis of the change implementation phase
        - Discussion should consider management levers that can be used, the people that can be involved, and the methodologies that can be deployed to ensure the success of the intervention

## KEY TEXTS

1. Henderson, R., Gulati, R. and Tushman, M. (eds.) (2015) *Leading sustainable change: An organizational perspective*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

## SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

1. Richardson, K., Renda, A., Alkemade, F., Walz, R., Simonsson, J., Grabbe, H., Świeboda, P., Balland, P.-A., et al. (2024) *Why Europe needs a systemic R&I policy: Redefining competitiveness for long-term sustainability*. rep. European Commission - Expert Group on the Economic and Societal Impact of Research and Innovation (ESIR), pp. 1–34.
2. Strand, R. (2024) 'Global sustainability frontrunners: Lessons from the Nordics', *California Management Review*, 66(3), pp. 5-26. doi:10.1177/00081256241234709.
3. Haski-Leventhal, D., Korschun, D. and Linnenluecke, M. (2021) *Sustainability is no longer enough: How corporations are becoming the new climate activists*, *California Management Review*. Available at: <https://cmr.berkeley.edu/2021/11/sustainability-is-no-longer-enough/>.
4. (2024) *AI and sustainability*, *SDSN Northern Europe*. Available at: <https://www.unsdsn-ne.org/en/news/ai-and-sustainability>.
5. Winston, A. (2024) *Will AI help or hurt sustainability? Yes*, *MIT Sloan Management Review*. Available at: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/will-ai-help-or-hurt-sustainability-yes/>.
6. Zewe, A. (2025) *Explained: Generative AI's environmental impact*, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*. Available at: <https://news.mit.edu/2025/explained-generative-ai-environmental-impact-0117>.
7. Stano, S. and Munoz, J.M. (2024) *3 ways to leverage A.I. for efficient energy management*, *California Management Review*. Available at: <https://cmr.berkeley.edu/2024/11/3-ways-to-leverage-a-i-for-efficient-energy-management/>.
8. Stackpole, B. (2025) *AI has high data center energy costs – but there are solutions*, *MIT Sloan*. Available at: <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/ai-has-high-data-center-energy-costs-there-are-solutions>.
9. Genus, A. and Stirling, A. (2018) 'Collingridge and the dilemma of control: Towards responsible and accountable innovation', *Research Policy*, 47(1), pp. 61-69. doi:10.1016/j.respol.2017.09.012.
10. De Marchi, V. (2012) 'Environmental innovation and R&D cooperation: Empirical evidence from Spanish manufacturing firms', *Research Policy*, 41(3) pp. 614-623. doi:10.1016/j.respol.2011.10.002.
11. Nickisch, C. (2018) 'McKinsey's head on why corporate sustainability efforts are falling short', *HBR IdeaCast*. Podcast. Available at: <https://hbr.org/podcast/2018/03/mckinseys-head-on-why-corporate-sustainability-efforts-are-falling-short>.
12. Jay, J., Isaacs, K. and Nguyen, H.L. (2025) *Getting strategic about sustainability: Use these four lenses to focus on what matters*, *Harvard Business Review*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2025/01/getting-strategic-about-sustainability>.
13. Jørgensen, S. and Pedersen, L.J.T. (2018) 'A process model for sustainable business model innovation', in *Restart sustainable business model innovation*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 183–192.
14. Scherer, A.G. and Voegtlin, C. (2020) 'Corporate governance for responsible innovation: Approaches to corporate governance and their implications for sustainable development',



- Academy of Management Perspectives*, 34(2), pp. 182-208. doi:10.5465/amp.2017.0175.
15. Matoh, S., Russell, S.V., Roelich, K. and Randles, S. (2024) 'Circular business model innovation and cognitive framing: Addressing the "missing micro"', *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 33(8), pp. 8656-8667. doi:10.1002/bse.3938.
  16. Kyrdoda, Y., Balzano, M. and Vianelli, D. (2025) 'The formation of a sustainable organizational identity: Insights from Brazilian coffee products', *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 34(1), pp. 1-18. doi:10.1002/bse.3975.
  17. Pena, C.J. and Mazutis, D. (2024) 'Organizational identity and corporate sustainability: A systematic literature review', *Academy of Management*, 2024(1). doi:10.5465/AMPROC.2024.17348abstract.
  18. Kjærgaard, A. and Morsing, M. (2018) 'Organizational identity and integration of sustainable development: A micro-level study of ethical closure and silence', Paper presented at EGOS, Tallinn, Estonia, 05/07/2018 - 07/07/2018.
  19. Funk, K. (2003) *Sustainability and performance*, *MIT Sloan Management Review*. Available at: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/sustainability-and-performance/>.
  20. Eckert, N.B., Kastbjerg, C. and Lundberg, A. (2024) *Tapping into the hidden consumer demand for sustainability*. Webinar. MIT Sloan Management Review. Available at: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/video/tapping-into-the-hidden-consumer-demand-for-sustainability/>.
  21. (n.d.) *Corporate sustainable reporting*, *UN Environment Programme*. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/resource-efficiency/what-we-do/responsible-industry/corporate-sustainability>.
  22. Pucker, K.P. (2021) *Overselling sustainability report: We're confusing output with impact*, *Harvard Business Review*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2021/05/overselling-sustainability-reporting>.
  23. Whelan, T., Zappa, B., Zeidan, R. and Fishbein, G. (2017) *How to quantify sustainability's impact on your bottom line*, *Harvard Business Review*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2017/09/how-to-quantify-sustainabilitys-impact-on-your-bottom-line>.
  24. (2023) *Connect your sustainability goals to your business performance*, *Harvard Business Review*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/sponsored/2023/01/connect-your-sustainability-goals-to-your-business-performance>.
  25. Erbetta, F., Bruno, C. and Priovano, C. (2022) 'Corporate sustainability and performance: An efficiency perspective', *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 32(6), pp. 2649-2661. doi:10.1002/bse.3262.
  26. Williams, A., Whiteman, G. and Parker, J.N. (2019) 'Backstage interorganizational collaboration: Corporate endorsement of the sustainable development goals', *Academy of Management*, 5(4), pp. 367-395. doi:10.5465/amd.2018.0154.
  27. Schöggli, J.-P., Stumpf, L. and Baumgartner, R.J. (2023) 'The role of interorganizational collaboration and digital technologies in the implementation of circular economy practices – Empirical evidence from manufacturing firms', *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 33(3), pp. 2225-2249. doi:10.1002/bse.3593.
  28. Vurro, C., Romito, S., Costanzo, L.A., Ghobadian, A. and Russo, A. (2023) 'Alliance management capabilities in sustainability-oriented collaboration: Problematisation and new research directions', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 26(1), pp. 8-33. doi:10.1111/ijmr.12346.
  29. Kiron, D., Kruschwitz, N., Haanaes, K., Reeves, M., Fuisz-Kehrbach, S.-K. and Kell, G. (2015)

*Joining forces: Collaboration and leadership for sustainability, MIT Sloan Management Review.*  
Available at: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/projects/joining-forces/>.

30. Consoli, D., Costantini, V. and Paglialunga, E. (2023) 'We're in this together: Sustainable energy and economic competitiveness in the EU', *Research Policy*, 52(1).  
doi:10.1016/j.respol.2022.104644.

## MODES OF ASSESSMENT

<b>Continuous Assessment (40%)</b>	Group presentation	20%
	Case analysis	20%
<b>Final Exam (60%)</b>	Role play	

## MODULE DESIGN TEAM

- Author: *Rezvan Velayati-Shokouhi*
- Reviewer: *Fil Zanasi*
- External Reviewer: *Nigel Tomlinson*