

**TECHNICAL SHEET OF THE SUBJECT**

Data of the subject	
Subject name	Business and Sustainability
Subject code	IBS-MBA-528
Main program	Official Master's Degree in Business Administration - MBA
Involved programs	Máster Universitario en Administración de Empresas (MBA) [First year] Máster Universitario en Ingeniería Industrial y Máster Universitario en Administración de Empresas [First year] Máster Universitario en Ingeniería de Telecomunicación y Mást. Univ. en Administración de Empresas [First year]
Level	Postgrado Oficial Master
Quarter	Semestral
Credits	3,0 ECTS
Type	Optativa
Department	Departamento de Gestión Empresarial
Coordinator	Carmen Goytre Castro (cgoytre@comillas.edu)
Office hours	By appointment
Course overview	The goal of this subject is to help students develop essential skills for sustainability business management considering the systemic complexity and uncertainty involved in eco-social problems. In particular - Raise awareness of the challenges ahead that sustainability presents for the society in general and business in particular - Acquire skills and tools to manage Environmental, Social and Government matters, in particular the first two - Acknowledge the contribution of Comillas as a community that provides a specially valuable perspective to sustainability - Ensure hands-on learning by developing an innovative project of a transformative business model for sustainability.

Teacher Information	
Teacher	
Name	Carmen Goytre Castro
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SPECIFIC DATA OF THE SUBJECT

Contextualization of the subject
Contribution to the professional profile of the degree
Sustainability has become a social paradigm that companies cannot ignore since they are the dominant institutions that shape our societies. Consumers, citizens, NGOs, and public administrators demand from business organizations social innovations and business models aligned with principles of environmental sustainability and social justice.
Sustainability challenges involve systemic complexities, risks and uncertainties, what makes such demands difficult to address, together with inertia, resistance to change, prevailing beliefs about economic and business issues. Hence, understanding sustainability dilemmas



and experiencing a diversity of frameworks and tools for sustainability management is of particular interest for business managers, whatever their specific area of expertise.

In addition, more and more investors, managers, workers and entrepreneurs want to take an active role in the transformation of companies towards business models defined by sustainability principles. We can see how large corporations establish ambitious commitments to reduce emissions towards carbon neutrality, how large investment funds announce that unsustainability will be a reason for exclusion from portfolios, how new proposals and business models emerge seeking alignment with the planetary limits or to give response to big social challenges. How to interpret this increasing attention to sustainability in companies? And how can companies be true drivers of change?

In sum, "Business and Sustainability" course aims to enable students: 1) to critically reflect on the business institution and its role in current eco-social challenges; 2) to apply tools and develop business management skills aimed at addressing such challenges; and 3) to build socially transformative business models from the principles of environmental sustainability and the common good.

Prerequisites

None, but the multidisciplinary approach of the course implies connections with the other MBA courses.

Competencies - Objectives

Competences

GENERALES

CG01	Analytic and synthesis cognitive capacities applied to business situations and managing and organisation problems.
CG02	Management of data and information as key elements for decision-making and for identification, formulation and resolution of business problems.
CG05	Ethical commitment with a behaviour based in moral principles and those principles of the organisation when facing moral dilemmas and corporate social responsibility issues.
CG06	Time management capacity with the purpose of improving personal and team efficiency within business organizations, its environment and its management.
CG07	Critical reasoning and argumentation according with the understanding of knowledge and know-how on business administrations, their external context and their administration and management processes.
CG08	Initiative, creativity and entrepreneurship when applying management techniques and related knowledge to management and development of business organizations.
CG09	Knowledge, understanding and handling of tools for diagnosis of the competitive position of a company, and designing and executing the company's strategic plan.

THEMATIC BLOCKS AND CONTENTS

Contents - Thematic Blocks

1. BUSINESS AND SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES: Environmental, Social and Governance



This first module will address the relationships between the company and its social and environmental environment, considering the influences, dependencies and tensions associated with that relationship. The evolution of such relations forms the basis on which companies are forced to adopt new ways of understanding their mission and to reshape their business model accordingly. The most updated legislative framework will be presented.

2. CHANGING PRACTICES: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABILITY

In all sectors, companies that understand sustainability challenges and the need to rethink their business model accordingly, are working to adopt more holistic measurement, management and reporting schemes, that go well beyond the financial perspective. This module deals with the most commonly used sustainability management approaches and tools, which students will have to put into practice through analysis and discussion, as well as through reasoned proposals for transformation in different industries.

3. REDEFINING BUSINESS: BUSINESS MODELS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Beyond changing practices so as not to lose competitiveness by reacting to pressures related to sustainability, companies can be created aimed at solving eco-social challenges. Thus, this would be their reason for being and their priority at both strategic and operational levels. The ability to create eco-social value from a business solution is a growing demand. For this reason, social enterprises proliferate in all industries. In line with this social demand, the third module of the course seeks to develop in students skills for the generation of eco social business value propositions (eg. based on circular economy, collaborative economy, slow economy, vibrant communities, social inclusion...), using well-proven approaches and methods such as design thinking.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

General methodological aspects of the subject

The teaching methods of the course are based on experiential and collective learning approaches. They place emphasis on cultivating a critical and reflexive spirit, together with proactivity and action. The learning activities are designed to help students to develop all the skills specified above.

The use of AI in this subject is allowed at the level:

o Level 3: Allowed under specific conditions (Level 3 - AI Collaboration)

This implies that AI might be used to complete the task, including idea generation, drafting, feedback and refinement. Students should critically evaluate and modify the AI suggested outputs, demonstrating their understanding.

In-class Methodology: Activities

Lectures

Instructors will promote debate during theoretical lectures. Students must come to lectures with all the prereading done. Attendance and participation are essential requirements for the effectiveness of the lecturing.

CG01, CG08, CE07

Case analysis, discussion and debate

Students will work individually on sustainability dilemmas for business and on corresponding case analyses based on companies from different industries. These activities will allow students to use, apply and discuss all theoretical frameworks and management tools in real business cases and situations. Students must come to

CG01, CG02, CG05,
CG06, CG08, CG09, CE07



the group work sessions with all the pre-reading done. Attendance and participation are essential requirements for the effectiveness of the group work sessions.

Eco-social business models proposal

Students will present their projects on eco-social business models to the whole group. Attendance and participation are essential requirements for the effectiveness of the presentation sessions.

CG01, CG02, CG05,
CG06, CG08, CG09,
CG07, CE07

Non-Presential Methodology: Activities

Teamwork on the eco-social business model proposal

Students will work in teams/pairs to identify an environmentally/socially relevant problem and to propose sustainability business models to address such challenges in a business format. Assignments will be fixed so that each group of students will make periodical deliverances of their pieces of work.

CG01, CG02, CG05,
CG06, CG08, CG09,
CG07, CE07

Individual research and reading

Each student will need to organise their time outside the class in order to do all the pre-readings of each session, and in order to profoundly study the subject: they will have to understand, elaborate, retain and assess all concepts, theories and tools presented and worked in class. The course instructors will recommend essential readings.

CG01, CG02, CG08,
CG09, CG07, CE07

Academic tutorials

Students will have the opportunity to meet with the course teacher on an individual basis. These tutorial sessions will help students to solve problems and uncertainties they face regarding the course content, activities and assessment.

CG01, CG09, CE07

SUMMARY STUDENT WORKING HOURS

CLASSROOM HOURS			
Seminars and workshops	Analysis and resolution of cases and exercises, individually or collectively	Lectures of an expository nature	Debates
10.00	10.00	8.00	2.00
NON-PRESENTIAL HOURS			
Monographic and research work, individual or group work	Individual study and organized reading	Analysis and resolution of cases and exercises, individually or collectively	Academic tutoring
18.00	15.00	10.00	2.00
ECTS CREDITS: 3,0 (75,00 hours)			

EVALUATION AND CRITERIA

The use of AI to produce full assignments or substantial parts thereof, without proper citation of the source or tool used, or without explicit permission in the assignment instructions, will be considered plagiarism and therefore subject to the University's General Regulations.



Evaluation activities	Evaluation criteria	Weight
Project on the creation of an eco-social business model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student is able to identify and deeply understand an ecosocial challenge• Acknowledges a variety of ideas and perspectives of the problem• Shows critical and reflective thinking• Provides arguments grounded on appropriate theoretical and analytical frameworks• Propose innovative solutions, grounded on appropriate frameworks• Effectively communicates and defend the suitability and feasibility of the value proposition	40
Case analysis and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student understands the influence of sustainability paradigm on the role of business in society and how firms are defined and managed• Shows critical and reflective thinking• Provides arguments grounded on appropriate theoretical and analytical frameworks• Applies management approaches and tools to deal with ecosocial impacts of business activities	20
Assignment to practice with sustainable management tools and frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student understands the influence of the sustainability paradigm on the role of business in society and how firms are defined and managed• Understands main frameworks and tools for sustainable management• Shows critical and reflective thinking	20
Class participation and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student shows sensitivity to the ecosocial dilemmas and challenges which organizations have to deal with and manage• The student understands the influence of the sustainability paradigm on the role of business in society and how firms are defined and managed• Shows critical and reflective thinking• Provides arguments grounded on appropriate theoretical and analytical frameworks	20



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To pass the course students must have at least a grade of "5" in each assessment activity. Assignments must be delivered in the time and date specified by the course instructor, otherwise, students will get a grade of "0" in the missed assignment.

RE-SITS: In case of failure, students can re-sit each failed activity. If the student passes all activities with a minimum degree of "5", the final grade weighting will be applied again.

STUDENTS WITH AN ATTENDANCE WAIVER: Absent students will be assessed only through an individual exam plus research work related to a social/sustainability business model. Their final grade will be formed by these activities, each weighing 50%.

AI USE: Any student who uses AI in a manner different to the one described in "General Methodological aspects" section will face a penalty that can lead to a fail in this subject

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

Basic Bibliography

Cavagnaro, E.; Curiel, G. (2012): The three levels of sustainability. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing.

Erhenfeld, J.R.; Hoffman, A.J. (2013): Flourishing. A frank conversation about sustainability. Sheffield:Greenleaf Publishing.

Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F., Acosta, A. (Eds.). (2019). Pluriverse: A post-development dictionary, Nueva Delhi:Tulika Books and Authorsupfront. Randers, J., Rockström, J., Stoknes, P. E., Golüke, U., Collste, D., Cornell, S. (2018). Transformation is feasible: How to achieve the sustainable development goals within planetary boundaries. A Report to the Club of Rome. Stockholm Resilience Centre.

Randers, J., Rockström, J., Stoknes, P. E., Golüke, U., Collste, D., Cornell, S. (2018). Transformation is feasible: How to achieve the sustainable development goals within planetary boundaries. A Report to the Club of Rome. Stockholm Resilience Centre.

Raworth, K. (2017). Doughnut economics: seven ways to think like a 21st century economist, White River Junction: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Waddock, S.; McIntosh, M. (2011): See change. Making the transition to a sustainable enterprise economy, Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing.

Weybrecht, G. (2014): The sustainable MBA. A business guide to sustainability, 2nd edition, Chichester:Wiley.

Complementary Bibliography

Instructors will provide students with a series of academic and non-academic readings related with each of the topics.