



## TECHNICAL SHEET OF THE SUBJECT

Data of the subject	
Subject name	Business and Sustainability
Subject code	E000011591
Involved programs	Máster Universitario en Administración de Empresas (MBA) [Primer Curso] Máster Universitario en Ingeniería Industrial y Máster Universitario en Administración de Empresas [Primer Curso] Máster Universitario en Ingeniería de Telecomunicación y Mást. Univ. en Administración de Empresas [Primer Curso]
Level	Postgrado Oficial Master
Quarter	Semestral
Credits	3,0 ECTS
Type	Optativa
Coordinator	Amparo Merino
Office hours	By appointment
Course overview	The general aim of the course is to help students develop essential skills for sustainability business management considering the systemic complexity and uncertainty involved in eco-social problems. Thus, students will have the opportunity to reflect and raise awareness on the role of business in this challenging environment, so that they are better equipped to understand, to apply and to evaluate main business approaches and tools that are being developed in response to sustainability challenges. In addition, they will experience with social innovations through the work on proposal of transformative business models for sustainability.

Teacher Information	
Teacher	
Name	Carmen Goytre Castro
Department	Departamento de Gestión Empresarial
E-Mail	cgoytre@comillas.edu
Teacher	
Name	Eduardo Gismera Tierno
Department	Departamento de Gestión Empresarial
E-Mail	egismera@icade.comillas.edu

## 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

<b>CG01</b>	Capacidades cognitivas de análisis y síntesis aplicadas a situaciones de negocios y problemáticas organizativas de gestión.
<b>CG02</b>	Gestión de la información y de datos como elementos clave para la toma de decisiones y la identificación, formulación y resolución de problemas empresariales.
<b>CG05</b>	Capacidades interpersonales de escuchar, negociar y persuadir y de trabajo en equipos multidisciplinares para poder operar de manera efectiva en distintos cometidos, y, cuando sea apropiado, asumir responsabilidades de liderazgo en la organización empresarial.
<b>CG06</b>	Compromiso ético en la aplicación de valores morales y los de la organización frente a dilemas éticos y de responsabilidad social corporativa.
<b>CG07</b>	Capacidad de gestión del tiempo con el objetivo de mejorar la efectividad personal y del equipo dentro del marco de las organizaciones empresariales, su entorno y su gestión.
<b>CG08</b>	Razonamiento crítico y argumentación acorde con la comprensión del conocimiento y del saber sobre las organizaciones empresariales, su contexto externo y su proceso de administración y dirección.
<b>CG09</b>	Capacidad de aprendizaje autónomo para seguir formándose para aprender a aprender las habilidades cognitivas y los conocimientos relevantes aplicados a la actividad profesional y empresarial.



## ESPECÍFICAS

**CE07**

Comprender los valores éticos y morales que prevalecen en la empresa, adquiriendo la capacidad de identificar y resolver los dilemas éticos que se presentan en la toma de decisiones empresarial y aplicar los instrumentos de gestión y evaluación de la RSE para su incorporación a la planificación estratégica de la empresa y su desarrollo organizativo.

## THEMATIC BLOCKS AND CONTENTS

### Contents - Thematic Blocks

#### 1. BUSINESS AND SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

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.

#### 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.

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

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

### 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			
Seminarios y talleres	Análisis y resolución de casos y ejercicios, individuales o colectivos	Lecciones de carácter expositivo	Debates
10.00	10.00	8.00	2.00
NON-PRESENTIAL HOURS			
Trabajos monográficos y de investigación, individuales o colectivos	Estudio individual y lectura organizada	Análisis y resolución de casos y ejercicios, individuales o colectivos	Tutoría académica
18.00	15.00	10.00	2.00
ECTS CREDITS: 3,0 (75,00 hours)			



## EVALUATION AND CRITERIA

Evaluation activities	Evaluation criteria	Weight
Team project on the creation of an eco-social business model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student is able to identify and deeply understand an ecosocial challenge</li><li>• Acknowledges a variety of ideas and perspectives of the problem</li><li>• Shows critical and reflective thinking</li><li>• Provides arguments grounded on appropriate theoretical and analytical frameworks</li><li>• Propose innovative solutions, grounded on appropriate frameworks</li><li>• Effectively communicates and defend the suitability and feasibility of the value proposition</li></ul>	30 %
Global case analysis, discussion and reflection to work individually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student understands the influence of sustainability paradigm on the role of business in society and how firms are defined and managed</li><li>• Shows critical and reflective thinking</li><li>• Provides arguments grounded on appropriate theoretical and analytical frameworks</li><li>• Applies management approaches and tools to deal with ecosocial impacts of business activities</li></ul>	20 %
Assignment in groups to practice with sustainable management tools and frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student understands the influence of sustainability paradigm on the role of business in society and how firms are defined and managed</li><li>• Shows critical and reflective thinking</li><li>• Provides arguments grounded on appropriate theoretical and analytical frameworks</li></ul>	30 %
Class participation and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student shows sensitivity to the ecosocial dilemmas and challenges which organizations have to deal with and manage</li><li>• The student understands the influence of the sustainability paradigm on the role of business in society and how firms are defined and managed</li><li>• Shows critical and reflective thinking</li><li>• Provides arguments grounded on</li></ul>	20 %



appropriate theoretical and analytical frameworks

## Ratings

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%.

## 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.