



TECHNICAL SHEET OF THE SUBJECT

Data of the subject	
Subject name	Sustainability
Subject code	E000004357
Main program	Official Master's Degree in Business Administration - MBA
Involved programs	Máster Universitario en Administración de Empresas (MBA) [Primer Curso]
Level	Postgrado Oficial Master
Quarter	Semestral
Credits	3,0 ECTS
Type	Optativa
Coordinator	Amparo Merino de Diego
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	
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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 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.

On the one hand, 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 with a diversity of frameworks and tools for sustainability management is of special interest for business managers, whatever their specific area of expertise.

On the other, 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 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. Specifically, the centrality of the paradigm of sustainability in "Business and Sustainability" course, involves strong relationships with subjects related to ethics and CSR, corporate governance and strategic management, along with the management track of MBA curriculum. In addition, "Global Environment" and "Intercultural Management" courses help students to understand the macro dimensions that explain the eco-social challenges that companies are facing. Finally, the "Leadership and Change" course provides the basis for developing an attitude as a change agent, key in leadership for sustainability.

Competencies - Objectives

Competences

GENERALES

CG01	Capacidades cognitivas de análisis y síntesis aplicadas a situaciones de negocios y problemáticas organizativas de gestión	
	RA1	Es capaz de enfrentarse con el estudio analítico de casos y escenarios, así como de llevar a efecto síntesis de información y de datos



CG06	Compromiso ético en la aplicación de valores morales y los de la organización frente a dilemas éticos y de responsabilidad social corporativa	
	RA2	Es sensible a la dimensión ética de los problemas sociales y ecológicos
CG08	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	
	RA1	Ejerce el pensamiento independiente y la reflexión personal sobre problemáticas diversas
CG09	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	
	RA2	Desarrolla habilidades necesarias para la investigación independiente
	RA3	Asiste a clase con regularidad y participa adecuadamente
ESPECÍFICAS		
CEO1	Comprensión de la influencia que el paradigma de la sostenibilidad global (coexistencia armoniosa de la productividad, lo social, y lo medioambiental) puede ejercer en el papel que las empresas desempeñan en la sociedad y en la forma en la que son administradas	
	RA1	Ser capaz de aplicar enfoques y herramientas de gestión para abordar el impacto social y ambiental de su actividad empresarial, tanto a escala local como global

THEMATIC BLOCKS AND CONTENTS

Contents - Thematic Blocks

MODULE 1. THE BUSINESS INSTITUTION AND THE 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.

MODULE 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.

MODULE 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 pre-reading done. Attendance and participation are essential requirements for the effectiveness of the lecturing sessions.

CG01, CG08, CEO1

Case analysis, discussion and debate

Students will work individually on sustainability dilemmas for business and on corresponding case analysis based on companies from different industries. These activities will allow students use, apply and discuss all theoretical frameworks and management tools into 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, CG06,
CG08, CG09, CEO1

Eco-social business models proposal

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

CG01, CG06,
CG08, CG09, CEO1

Non-Presential Methodology: Activities



<p>Teamwork on the eco-social business model proposal</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>CG01, CG08, CG09, CEO1</p>
<p>Individual research and reading</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>CG01, CG08, CG09, CEO1</p>
<p>Tutorship</p> <p>Students will have a chance to meet with the course instructor individually. These sessions will help students solve problems and uncertainties faced regarding the course contents, activities and assessment.</p>	<p>CG09, CEO1</p>

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			
Estudio individual y lectura organizada	Trabajos monográficos y de investigación, individuales o colectivos	Tutoría académica	Análisis y resolución de casos y ejercicios, individuales o colectivos
15.00	18.00	2.00	10.00
ECTS CREDITS: 3,0 (75,00 hours)			

EVALUATION AND CRITERIA

Evaluation activities	Evaluation criteria	Weight
Final exam	Global case analysis, discussion and reflection to work individually	20 %



Team project on the creation of a eco-social business model	Creation, presentation and defence of the proposal	30 %
Attendance and proactive class participation	Oral contributions to every learning activity performed in the classroom, with a constructive and proactive attitude	10 %
Case analysis and discussion	Questions, arguments and reflections brought into the classroom in sessions devoted to case analysis and discussions	10 %
Assignment in groups to practice with sustainable management tools and frameworks	Examination, critical analysis and proposals concerning sustainability management and in a real company	30 %

Ratings

To pass the course students must have at least a grade of "5" in each 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 pass 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 and individual exam plus a research work related to a social/sustainability business model. Their final grade will be formed by these activities, each weighting 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.

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.



COMILLAS

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2020 - 2021

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.

In compliance with current regulations on the **protection of personal data**, we would like to inform you that you may consult the aspects related to privacy and data [that you have accepted on your registration form](#) by entering this website and clicking on "download"

<https://servicios.upcomillas.es/sedelectronica/inicio.aspx?csv=02E4557CAA66F4A81663AD10CED66792>