

Get ready for MSc Sustainable Development in Practice

Welcome to UWE and to the MSc Sustainable Development in Practice! I am looking forward to meeting you and to helping you to have a rewarding and fulfilling time on our programme. This letter outlines a few key things which you can do to prepare yourself for your studies. Please get in touch if you have any queries.



Dr Georgina Gough
Programme Leader

Before you start

We are looking forward to welcoming you in the week commencing 15 September for Starting Block and the beginning of your programme.

Starting Block will help you settle into university and to help you get to know your teaching team and course mates. We will help you find your way around, get used to our systems, and practise the skills you need to make a strong start. Look out for further emails and explore the [Starting Block website](#) with more details.

Your [timetable](#) will be available to you via MYUWE (login required) once you have started the registration process. Please visit the '[Understanding your teaching timetable](#)' website to find out when your timetable will be published.

Preparing and arrival

You can find everything you need to know about registration, Starting Block and the start of teaching, on our [Preparing and Arrival](#) webpage. Take a look at our website to familiarise yourself with our facilities and services such as the [library](#), [study skills](#), [academic support](#), [health and wellbeing support](#) and much more. In relation to the study skills guide pages, I would particularly suggest that you look at the information on reading and writing, referencing, research skills and English language. Even if you have studied recently, it is good to reflect on areas which you might need to pay more attention to in your work.

You can also explore our support for careers and enterprise. [UWE Careers & Enterprise](#) provide a range of workshops, appointments and a huge range of online resources to support students in realising their future ambitions. The [Careers Toolkit](#) is our online portal to finding vacancies, booking onto events and accessing a range of resources.

Registration

Once you have satisfied all admissions requirements, we'll send you your login details for our IT systems to enable you to activate your university email account. Once your account has been activated, you'll gain access to the [MYUWE](#) platform where you can register. Note that your login details for MYUWE are different to those used for the UWE Welcome website. Registration for September programmes will only be open from August onwards. You can find guidance and further information on our [Registration](#) website.

ID card - upload your photo now

We can only print your ID card if you have added your photo to [MYUWE](#). To avoid delays, upload your photo as soon as you receive your login details. For help, go to our [student card guidance](#).

Each programme's induction programme is different, and more information about the programme for Sustainable Development in Practice will follow shortly after this communication.

I hope that it will be possible for us to undertake a group experience together early on in the course. This will be based locally to the UWE Frenchay site. Previously, we have visited a local community farm project to hear about the challenges of running a volunteer-based initiative and to undertake some practical volunteering work. We have also walked around a local nature park to learn about its history and conservation. I expect us to undertake a similar activity in late September this year too, when you join us.

In addition to module sessions and programme catch-ups, there will be many opportunities through your study for you to attend events, lectures and activities. If you are studying fulltime, you should expect to have scheduled teaching activities on 2-3 days per week and part-time students should expect to have teaching on 1-2 days per week. Our **draft** timetable has core module teaching on Fridays (on campus) with reading groups associated with the four 15-credit core modules on Tuesday late afternoon/evenings (online). Full time students taking optional modules will have one other day of teaching per week which will vary depending on which optional modules you choose.

Please note that the majority of teaching materials are made available online and many sessions are recorded to enable you to catch up on sessions that you may have to miss due to other commitments or illness or to revisit after the original session. You can also expect pre-recorded material to be available or activities to be set for modules to supplement live teaching. However, for privacy and confidentiality reasons, not all sessions are recorded. You are expected to attend all core teaching activities except in unusual circumstances. We know from experience that students who cannot attend most sessions struggle to maintain a good performance on the course. It is also difficult to develop good relationships with your peers if you are not present regularly. The online platforms which we primarily use are Blackboard and Microsoft Teams.

Engage with your programme

Start your learning

Have a go at these activities to start preparing for your course and induction:

Take the [Sustainability Literacy Test](#) (SuLiTest). This will be available to you from 11 May 2025 until 28 September 2025. You will need to enter some details about yourself to register. Details of the session are:

Session Code: **AT-C645-1FA8**

Session Name: **MSc Sustainable Development in Practice pre-course activity**

Starting Date: **2025-05-11 09:00**

Ending Date: **2025-09-28 22:00**

This is an initiative of the United Nations that UWE supports. For the purposes of pre-induction activity, the test has been set up in learning mode rather than test mode. This means that you will get information about the correct answers. As you take the test, make informal notes on things like:

- Topics that you feel you are comfortable with
- Topics that you feel you want to read more about
- Reports/documents that you need to look up at a later date
- Personal feelings/perspectives on the issues highlighted
- General observations about the test

You do not need to take the test in one sitting. You should be able to save your answers and complete at a later time. It is suggested that you allow 2-3 hours to undertake the test, click on to relevant links provided in the test and make notes as per the bullet points above. We will discuss this exercise during our induction activities but it will not form part of your core modules. You may identify reading that you want to undertake as a result of taking the SuLiTest. In the meantime, we suggest some specific reading, detailed below.

Read around your subject

To help you to enhance these skills and be ready to engage with your studies, you should start to read and research around sustainability/sustainable development issues before you arrive. Here are some recommended titles to get you started, to be inspired by and to understand the scope of your degree programme:

- Read: Rockström, J., W. Steffen, K. Noone, Å. Persson, F. S. Chapin, III, E. Lambin, T. M. Lenton, M. Scheffer, C. Folke, H. Schellnhuber, B. Nykvist, C. A. De Wit, T. Hughes, S. van der Leeuw, H. Rodhe, S. Sörlin, P. K. Snyder, R. Costanza, U. Svedin, M. Falkenmark, L. Karlberg, R. W. Corell, V. J. Fabry, J. Hansen, B. Walker, D. Liverman, K. Richardson, P. Crutzen, and J. Foley. 2009. Planetary boundaries: exploring the safe operating space for humanity. [Ecology and Society 14\(2\): 32.](#) This will be useful pre-reading for your first core module, Sustainable Development: Principles and Practice. Should be available at: <https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss2/art32/>

A TedTalk linked to this paper can be found here: Let the Environment Guide Our Development, by J. Rockstrom, TEDGlobal. Available online at: www.ted.com/talks/johan_rockstrom_let_the_environment_guide_our_development?

- Read: Lim, M. M. L., P. Søgaard Jørgensen, and C. A. Wyborn. 2018. Reframing the sustainable development goals to achieve sustainable development in the Anthropocene—a systems approach. [Ecology and Society, 23\(3\):22](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolsoc.2018.03.002). Also useful for first module.
- Explore the <https://www.bristolonecity.com/> website, including the Bristol One City Plan. This will be relevant to the context for sessions and potentially your assessment on your first module Sustainable Development: Principles and Practice.
- Explore: the website: <https://unglobalcompact.org/> A basic understanding of the Global Compact will be useful context for your second core module, Sustainable Organisation: Vision into practice.
- Watch: [The Story of Change](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ug98vUJm808) and other movies in The Story of Stuff series if you wish. These will inform your thinking about how positive change might happen and which key actors might be in this change.

Feel free to read anything about sustainable development that you wish. A variety of opinions, perspectives, experiences and sources will help you to develop a critical awareness of the challenges surrounding sustainable development. Please note though that we **do not** expect you to have a thorough understanding of sustainable development or sustainability before you arrive.

Module choices

Full-time students will make choices about their two optional modules during induction. Part-time students do not need to select optional modules until year two. Part-time students also need to decide when to undertake their Work-based Learning module. Discussion of this will take place in the early weeks of the course.

Connect with others

The academic team is approachable and very happy to answer your questions. You are welcome to email to arrange a call or online meeting.

You may also be interested in joining [The Students' Union at UWE Green Team or the Sustainability Committee](#) - SDiP students regularly sit on the Committee!

You are encouraged to attend the [Green Mingle](#) in Bristol every now and again. These take place on the first Thursday of each month. The Bristol Climate and Nature Partnership who coordinate the Mingles do interesting work. You may also be interested in the work of [Future Leap and the Future Economy Network](#).

Be prepared

Access support

Check the information on our [Disability web pages](#) so you know what you need to do. If you need any urgent additional mobility or other support to fully access all activities during your studies, contact me as your programme leader.

Get equipped

The University has computers on all our campuses for you to use during your studies. These provide access to our core digital learning tools and any specialist software required for your course. You may have scheduled sessions in computer labs or other specialist facilities, and you will be able to use open-access PCs for self-study.

UWE Bristol licenses many specialist software packages for use on personal laptops for the duration of your course. These will be available to use via AppsAnywhere once you enroll. If you're struggling to meet the financial demands of your course, please contact [the Student Money Service](#) team for advice and guidance.

See the UWE website for detailed information on [choosing your IT equipment](#) including [recommended specifications](#). For this programme we recommend the **Core Specification**, although students who choose optional modules involving GIS or media may wish to opt for the **Enhanced Specification**. Please ensure that you have regular access to a computer with internet access during your studies.

You will be expected to have sound word processing skills for your course. It is also helpful to have basic understanding of Microsoft Excel, particularly if you think that you might be interested in more science-based options and topics like water or air quality.

Key Dates

Please note that attendance and engagement are both very important and if you are not able to come to particular sessions, we ask that you let us know in advance. You can find the [term date information here](#) but be sure to check your own timetable on MYUWE and cross-check with information provided by your module leaders and by me as your programme leader.

As outlined above, full-time students should expect to have time-tabled classes on campus on 2-3 days per week during term-time. There may also be online sessions. Part-time students should expect to have timetabled classes on 1-2 days per week most weeks during term-time with occasional additional activity. There will be many optional events offered to you which you can take up on a case-by-case basis as interest and availability allows.

In addition, there will be key dates specifically for your programme which will not appear in the University academic calendar (for example, assessment activities). You will need to ensure that you are clear about assessment arrangements and deadlines for all of your modules as soon as possible once term (or the relevant module) begins. It is essential that

you regularly check Blackboard (our virtual learning environment) once you have started the course as this is where academic staff will communicate with you. We will cover all of this during induction.

Full-time and part-time students in their second year are expected to attend research training in preparation for your dissertation module. Part-time students who want to get an early insight into what the dissertation involves are also welcome to join these sessions. Dates for this training will be set ASAP and communicated to you at induction.

International students

[The Global Student Support Team](#) offer information and advice to ensure you receive all the support you need to get the best from your time at UWE Bristol. They are here to help you to settle in when you first arrive at UWE Bristol and organise social events to help you to adapt to your new environment.

Who to contact if you have questions

For any questions about the programme, please contact me: **Georgina Gough** via email at Georgina.Gough@uwe.ac.uk

Please note: this information has been provided on the assumption that you will meet the conditions of your offer and be eligible to take up your place.

Entry: September 2025

Last updated: Spring 2025