

## **Strengthening MSc Programmes by Embedding Sustainability in A Shared Core Module**

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Integrating sustainability into university education is vital for preparing students to address global challenges, enhance their competitiveness and employability, and promote ethical decision-making. By integrating sustainability across disciplines, universities play a pivotal role in shaping a more sustainable future.

In this blog, we illustrate how sustainability elements are incorporated into a core MSc finance module, Principles of Finance, shared among several MSc programmes in the School of Accounting, Finance, and Economics at the University of Greenwich. Shared modules enable students from various academic disciplines to study a common subject together. According to Lyall et al. (2015), successfully embedding interdisciplinary learning and teaching into a shared curriculum is driven by university strategy. By prioritizing shared curricula as a strategic goal, universities seek to cultivate a learning environment that prepares students with the interdisciplinary skills and perspectives necessary for addressing complex real-world challenges. Similarly, Bovill and Woolmer (2019) believe that shared modules offer a practical avenue for enacting university strategies concerning curriculum development, student engagement, and interdisciplinary learning. According to University of Greenwich Strategy 2030, sustainability is a crucial strategy. Therefore, the integration of sustainability content into this shared module facilitates the implementation of university strategies across these programmes.

This pivotal finance module is shared across several MSc programmes, thereby extending the advantages of sustainability integration to these programmes. The spectrum of sustainability content encompasses critical subjects such as Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), sustainability and climate risk, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as trends and flows in sustainable finance. The assessments within this shared module are strategically designed to introduce sustainability concepts through case studies. The case studies feature companies engaged in business activities connected to sustainability. These assessments integrate ethical considerations and social responsibility aspects. The integration ensures that students understand broader implications of their work on society and environment.

The adaptability of this shared finance module is notable, as it stays abreast of emerging trends in sustainability and adjusts as necessary to ensure its continuous relevance. By embedding sustainability content within this module, these MSc programmes not only equip students with requisite knowledge and skills but also instill a profound commitment to sustainability in their future professional practices. Moreover, staff members involved in delivering the sustainability topics also gain substantial benefits from the incorporation of these contents. It provides them with opportunities to engage in impactful research. Positive feedback received from our MSc students highlights the value of lectures that include practical applications of sustainability concepts. This allows them to see how theoretical knowledge can be applied in real-world scenarios.

*“The content covered has not only enriched my understanding of sustainability but has also provided valuable insights into its significance for both personal and professional development.”*

*“The lecture has broadened my horizons on how sustainable practices are becoming important in the business operations. Additionally, the applications discussed in the lectures, such as ESG rating and models have inspired me to think about writing my dissertation related to ESG in the banking sectors.”*

*“I would like to express my gratitude for the thoughtfully crafted sustainability lectures. The knowledge gained has not only enriched my academic experience but has also equipped me with a practical and forward-thinking mindset that I believe will be invaluable in my future career endeavors”*

*“... this lecture is a good step about our future careers as it informs us about the importance of the environment and what we should do to keep a healthy company.”*

*“... the provided examples were helpful as it shows the importance of implementing those concepts in real-world scenarios and made the lecture more engaging.”*

The inclusion of sustainability in this MSc core module benefits students by enhancing their learning experience and preparing them for contemporary challenges. It ensures student engagement with real-world issues like climate change and ESG and makes learning more relevant. Practical applications such as case studies enable students to apply theoretical knowledge and enhance practical skills. MSc students equipped with sustainability knowledge and skills are better prepared for the evolving job market, where employers value professionals who can contribute to sustainable practices.

## **References**

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