Leadership in Sustainability Management

Build on your skills and knowledge to help prepare yourself to take the lead in sustainability. This noncredit certificate will help you manage your organization’s efforts to go and stay “green.”

About the Program
The Leadership in Sustainability Management Certificate is built on the University of Chicago Graham School’s tradition of liberal education, applied to our most pressing modern challenges. It brings together University faculty with practitioners in the field to provide courses drawing on the latest research plus real world experience.

Program Structure
The LSM is a 7-course program designed to be completed in one year:
• Gain broad knowledge of key sustainability topics
• Start the program in any quarter
• Convenient downtown Chicago location
• Open to students just getting started in sustainability
• Network with sustainability practitioners
• Boost your résumé with a credential from the University of Chicago

Program Requirements
Six 15-hour courses (meet once per week):
• Sustainable Development
• Environmental Law and Policy
• Sustainability Leadership and Change Management
• Science of Sustainability
• Environmental Economics
• Green Messaging
• Capstone Project (independent work)

Application/Registration Requirements
Applications accepted year-round. At-large option: take up to two classes without applying.

To apply, submit:
• Completed online application form
• $40 application fee
• Educational and professional résumé
• Statement of purpose (250-word limit)
LOCATION OF COURSES
The University of Chicago Gleacher Center
450 N. Cityfront Plaza Drive
Chicago, IL 60611

CONTACT INFO
773.702.1729
sustain@uchicago.edu
grahamschool.uchicago.edu/sustainabilitymanagement

DEADLINES
Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis.

TUITION AND FEES
Tuition is $610 per course. Visit our website to register for current courses.

REQUIRED COURSES

Sustainable Development (Autumn)
An introductory seminar on the scope of meaning attached to the term “sustainability,” one that analyzes some of the common conceptions in this area. This course reviews the concept's manifestations to-date, with emphasis on the more recent evolution of sustainability concerns and their complex relationship to different modes of environmental response and to widely accepted notions of “best practices.” An overview of the main issues in sustainability, both as a local and global idea.

Science of Sustainability (Autumn)
What do we know about the climate crisis? How do we distinguish science from politicized hype? This course provides an overview of the state of research on climate change and other sustainability-related science topics. Beyond imparting an overview of the relevant scientific issues, this course will help students learn where to go for reliable and accessible information in order to stay informed in the future.

Environmental Law and Policy (Winter)
While many of the engines driving sustainability are commercial (consumer preference for “green” brands, for example), regulatory policy will likely have the greatest impact internationally. In this course, we outline the relevant legal and policy infrastructures attempting to redress climate change, govern environmental health and safety, and establish local and international policy. This course will be helpful for anyone charged with keeping an enterprise compliant with regulation and establishing productive working relationships with governing bodies.

Environmental Economics (Winter)
There are persuasive scientific, moral, and ethical arguments for reducing greenhouse gases. But there are also considerable financial incentives—and costs. Understanding how to speak of the “value” of sustainability in terms of dollars and cents is an essential skill for anyone trying to lead a business to change. This course teaches how to apply economic paradigms to sustainability efforts. Students will emerge better equipped to evaluate sustainability options for their budgetary impact and to guide an enterprise toward fiscally sound approaches to improved environmental practices, contributing to the overall sustainability of a venture.

Sustainability Leadership and Change Management (Spring)
Whether multinational corporation or small non-profit, moving an enterprise toward more sustainable practices requires effective leadership, thoughtful planning, and flawless execution. This course discusses approaches to embedding sustainability at the strategic planning level and how then to direct implementation through tested project and change management tactics. We will emphasize empirical, data-driven decision making models. Case studies illustrate how different organizations have approached change.

Green Messaging (Spring)
Communication is one of the most important tools leaders use to reinforce the commitments and activities underway to support sustainable operations. Against a backdrop of confusion, allegations of green washing, green blushing, and in many cases, lack of information, the need to develop clear, accurate and actionable messages to drive sustainability becomes even more critical. In many cases, the sustainability commitment has become front and center of an organization’s brand and reputation. Sustainability reporting is also emerging as a key element in implementing CSR initiatives. In this course, we’ll look at ways of communicating the importance of sustainability efforts to the investment community, corporate/institutional leaders, shareholders, employees, media and the general public.

Capstone Project: Holistic Problem Solving (independent work) (available each term)
The final course in the program seeks to apply the liberal arts strategies and technical knowledge explored in the previous quarters in a “real world” scenario. Students will develop a model sustainability plan for a hypothetical entity, although they may also choose to draw upon the real problems facing their workplace. Case studies and test scenarios from program partner companies and organizations.