Certificate in Sustainable Development and Social Innovation

The Certificate aims to provide a better understanding on the complex challenges, choices and trade-offs society, organisations and individuals face as we reach the limits of the biophysical carrying capacity of our planet. Participants will develop new knowledge, attitudes and skills to better act upon these challenges as competent citizens and reflective practitioners.

The Certificate offers tools for social learning to tap into the collective intelligence of diverse groups of stakeholders and experts on issues such as local water- and energy production and consumption, waste and recycling issues, and affordable and sustainable housing as well as transport. The course provides an overview on most recent academic insights on alternative approaches to social organisations of technological and infrastructure development, material production and consumption, and scientific research evaluating sustainable transformation of society. New forms of accountability of individuals and organisations for the use of scarce natural resources and energy are scrutinised. Of particular interest are also measurement, indicator and reporting regimes and their role in affecting transformational change.

The Certificate offers direct experience of engaging with a very diverse social learning group by accepting professionals and students from all levels and degree programmes. Experimental learning opportunities, including peer group projects on salient problems in Luxembourg, equip participants for making better informed and more reflexive judgments and for acting as change agents at home and at work.

Learning objectives

- A better understanding of the complexity and interdependencies of the natural world and the social world, and in particular how human activities impact global and local environmental change.

- Critical thinking about how we produce and legitimise new knowledge, and tools and processes to find innovative solutions in diverse groups with shared stances.

- The capacity to recognise multiple legitimate but irreconcilable perspectives held by diverse experts and stakeholders, stemming from diversity in values, world-views, and scientific method, and intra-generational considerations of scientific evidence, and priority setting.

- The capacity to appreciate contradictions and uncertainties arising from gaps between local and global perspectives. Global perspectives consider example geographic interdependencies, macro-perspectives and generalisations, the scientific method, and intra-generational considerations. Local perspectives can consider situation contingency, the particular, and the case study method.

The Certificate targets professionals and students registered in any degree programme (Bachelor, Master, or PhD) who are motivated to engage more actively on issues relating to sustainable development.

The learning concept relies on the dynamics of learning in a diverse group in an interactive manner, in order to gain an understanding of disparate perspectives on complex issues and processes that can serve to provide a shared understanding of the issue and basis for concerted action.

- The skill to apply tools for analysing and drawing together insights across disciplines and stakeholder, and the understanding that it takes negotiation, listening, giving and taking to find ‘acceptable’ solutions.

- An understanding of diverse alternative forms of social organisation of more sustainable production and consumption activities, for example in the form of social enterprises, including legal, financial and community-relations aspects.

- The competence to stage social learning processes with diverse groups of stakeholders to co-create a common basis of new knowledge for concerted action on diverse issues (transport, energy-use in the built environment, food production & consumption, etc.) and to engage science and scientists in an effective manner.

- The competence to recognise solutions emerging from such co-creation processes to overcome disputes arising from disparate worldviews and underlying values.

The Certificate is designed to be compatible with a full-time job. Students can enrol to obtain it as a second qualification in parallel to pursuing their main degree-whilst at the University. Alternatively they can take individual courses as optional courses towards their main degree.

The Certificate is not a specialisation, but fundamental to taking up new responsibilities as competent citizens and reflexive practitioners. Most, if not all economic actors are increasingly aware of having to account for environmental and equity issues.

Course Core 1: ‘Science and Citizens meet Challenges of Sustainability’ (6 ECTS)

The course will provide participants with tools to critically approach environmental and social challenges of sustainable development, including energy and drinking water-generation and -use, and agriculture and fixed production. All thematic units provide diverse disciplinary perspectives from the natural and social sciences, and from practitioners.

Lectures aim at learning along three dimensions:

- How knowledge is co-created with scientific and social norms.
- How to take into account diverging perspectives, interests and expertise.
- How to act upon local and global interconnectedness, interdependencies, and inequalities.

Target public and career prospects

The Certificate requires completion of the two core courses and at least one peer group project associated with the two core courses. The remaining four ECTS can be obtained either by completing an auxiliary course, such as courses on ‘Global Environmental Change in the Anthropocene’ or ‘Sustainable Development and Social Innovation’, or by engaging in an associated organisation.
This course introduces diverse approaches to Social Enterprise that aim to address challenges of social inequity and sustainability. One central theme is the question of defining, measuring and reporting on the common good, values and value creation beyond financial returns. Challenges of impact measurement include accounting for very different quantitative and qualitative impacts of specific plans and actions on disparate stakeholder communities.

Teaching staff

Core Course 1
• Raymond Andersen, Graduate political scientist, JENDA (Institut für politische Bildung)
• Henry-Michael Cauche Dr, Head of Research Unit on Agriculture, CRP Henri Tudor
• Nicolas Demontagne, Researcher in Sociology, University of Luxembourg
• Josiane Eppers, Human Resources Consultant, ADT Center, Bertrange, Luxembourg
• Arnaud Gelis, Research Unit in Environmental Science, University of Luxembourg
• Carole Gira, Parliamentarian, Mayor of Bellange, Luxembourg
• Michel Gries, Head of Center, UN Centre Hellenfels, Luxembourg
• Paola Hild, Researcher, Resource Centre for Environmental Technologies, CRP Henri Tudor
• Andreas Immen, Professor in Macroeconomics and applied Macroeconomics, University of Luxembourg
• Karoline Stophave, Graduate Stipendiary, B.E.A. Luxembourg
• Ariane König Dr, Head of Sustainable Development, University of Luxembourg
• Carmen Maganeda Dr, Research Associate, Unit 2: Identity, Politics, Society and Spaces, University of Luxembourg
• Sebastian Mahrt, Prof of Department of Education, University of Trier, Germany
• Agnes Poiss, Senior Lecturer, Educational Sciences, University of Luxembourg
• Christian Schütz, Prof. Head of Life Science Unit, Identities, Politics, Society and Spaces, University of Luxembourg
• Susanne Siebertritter, Prof. Head of Laboratory for Photovoltaics, University of Luxembourg
• Philipp Senevitiner, Research Associate, Psychology, University of Luxembourg
• Walter Radenmacher, Director General, EUROSTAT, Luxembourg
• Jerome Ranvetz Dr, Independent Consultant, Oxford, United Kingdom

Admission
The main prerequisites are fluency in English and a strong motivation to engage professionally and/or personally to foster societal transformation for sustainable development. Candidates are selected upon submission of a letter of motivation and CV, according to criteria specified in the guide for applicants.

Enrollment
Please enrol online via the Students Department (SEVE):
www.uni.lu > Application & Re-registration button

Course schedule
The courses will take place each Tuesday on the Campus d’Esch-sur-Alzette, from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM.

Contact
Dr Ariane König
Head of Sustainable Development and Senior Researcher
University of Luxembourg

The course will start in October 2013, the ‘Science and Citizens meet Challenges of Sustainability’ course will start in February 2014.

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For the Certificate the normal € 200 fee per semester for programme registration with the University applies.