



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

MA (Hons) Sustainable Development
Honours Years 3 & 4
Programme Handbook
Academic year 2023/24

Welcome to Honours in the Sustainable Development MA Honours Degree!

To those of you entering Year 3 - welcome to your Honours years in Sustainable Development! To those of you entering Year 4, also welcome back; you are, no doubt, filled with a mix of excitement, trepidation and satisfaction. Through your Honours courses and your dissertation, this is the time when you bring to fruition the learning that you have gained so far, and you focus on issues of particular interest to you. We look forward to guiding you through the home straight and celebrating with you your successes.

During this year, we look forward to more possibilities for student interaction and opportunities to engage with staff. Sustainable Development students are a pleasure to teach because of your energy, passion, enthusiasm, and active engagement in everything that the degree, and the University, has to offer. I hope you continue to make the most of your time here.

There continues to be a wide variety of courses available from which SD students can choose; and a range of sustainability-related teaching, research and other events available at the University. If you haven't already joined, the 'Sustainable Development Association' (SDA), for students on and beyond this degree, is just one great way in which you can begin to put sustainability into practice.

The Sustainable Development team looks forward to accompanying you during these Honours years and until your Graduation.

With our very best wishes to you all

Dr Jacob Doherty,
Degree Programme Director

Academic staff

Dr Isabelle Darmon, Exchange Coordinator
Dr Claire Haggett, Academic Adviser, Cohort Lead Year 3 & 4
Dr Sarah Parry, SSLC Convenor
Dr Eugénia Rodrigues, Course Organiser, Cases in Sustainable Development
Dr Zoe Russell, Course Organiser, Responding to sustainability challenges:

Student Adviser

Sue Renton

Pathway liaisons

Politics and IR: Prof Elizabeth Bomberg
Social Anthropology: Dr Jacob Doherty
Sociology: Dr Claire Haggett
Geography: Dr Hannah Fitzpatrick
Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (STIS): Dr Sarah Parry

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1. Using this Handbook

This handbook is for Honours students undertaking the MA (Hons) programme in Sustainable Development. The following pages include information on the aims, structure and requirements of the degree, the general rules governing assessment and examinations, useful information about the many extracurricular activities and facilities available to Sustainable Development students, and contact information for students seeking advice, support, or information on careers.

Sustainable Development is an interdisciplinary degree, offered through the School of Social and Political Science (SSPS).

This handbook is not intended as a replacement for the official publications of the University such as the University Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, which can be found at [Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study \(ed.ac.uk\)](https://www.ed.ac.uk/degree-regulations-and-programmes-of-study)

Comments or queries regarding this handbook should be addressed to the Programme Director, Dr Jacob Doherty, Jacob.Doherty@ed.ac.uk

If you require this document or any of the internal University of Edinburgh online resources mentioned in this document in an alternative format please email the degree Student Adviser, Sue Renton: sue.renton@ed.ac.uk. If Sue is not available, you can email: student.sps@ed.ac.uk

Email is the official method of communication for all students. When you join the University you are given a University of Edinburgh email account and address. Students must access and manage this account regularly (at least 3 times per week) as it is assumed that students have opened and acted on these communications. Failure by students to do so will not be considered an acceptable excuse for student actions or inactions or as a grounds for appeal.

Students can set up an auto-forward from their University email account to ensure that all official University communications are received. Guidance on how to do this is [here](#). You should reply to email from your university account though, not a personal one.

2. Honours in Sustainable Development

2.1 Pathways in Honours

You now have a firm footing as a Sustainable Development student grounded in one of our five pathways.

**** Please see Appendix 1 for a table showing the degree structure for each pathway****

2.2 Honours courses

Students who progress to Honours take the following courses:

a. Core Sustainable Development courses

In Year 3, students take two core Sustainable Development courses: 'Cases in Sustainable Development' in semester 1 and 'Responding to sustainability challenges: critical debates' in semester 2. Each is a 20-credit course.

In Year 4 the core Sustainable Development 'course' is a dissertation on a Sustainable Development topic, supervised within, and using the research methods of, your pathway subject (40 credits).

b. Pathway courses

In third year, Sustainable Development students must take 40 credits of Honours courses in their pathway subject. Each pathway has specific requirements. These pathway-specific requirements are laid out in Appendix 1.

In fourth year, students must normally take 40 credits of Honours courses in their pathway subject, but there is a free choice from the list of available Honours courses in that subject.

c. Other courses

In both Year 3 and Year 4, students take 40 credits of other courses that are "linked to a sustainable development theme". We interpret this requirement broadly – if in doubt as to whether your choices are acceptable, please consult the Academic Adviser or the Programme Director. These courses may be from any subject area, with the exception of Geography pathway students, who must take courses from outwith Geography.

3. Community-Building, Events and Student Voice

3.1 Community-building

We are very keen to support a community of active learners in Sustainable Development.

- We begin by offering meetings and events during Welcome Week.
- There is a weekly email, 'SD Briefs' to keep you all updated with news and events.
- You will have a dedicated Personal Tutor who will meet individually with you
- We have a PALS (Peer Assisted Learning Scheme) in place. This is a scheme which is supported by Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) and is run by students, for students. It is an informal and friendly source of advice, support and provides opportunities to meet with other students. EUSA and the University have been widely developing the Peer Support Project across the University since 2012. Further information can be viewed on the SPS web site <https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/students/undergraduate/support/peer-learning> and at the EUSA web site at <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/peerlearningsupport/becomevolunteer>.

PALS recruitment normally begins in March and Sue Renton, Student Adviser, can provide information prior to this if you are interested in becoming a PALS leader.

- Our Staff-Student Liaison Committee meets once per semester (see section 3.3, below).
- We have an excellent student-led society for all students interested in SD, the Sustainable Development Association (SDA).

3.2 Events relevant to Sustainable Development

A veritable plethora of sustainability-themed events take place across campus through the year! We advertise many of these through the SD Briefs, and the wide range of activities provides students with the opportunities to get involved with different groups and projects if they wish.

If you would like to circulate information about SD-related activities, you are most welcome to contribute to the SD Briefs – send Sue an email by 12 midday on a Friday for the item to appear in the Briefs the following Monday (sue.renton@ed.ac.uk).

Within the wider university, a particularly relevant seminar series is the Our Changing World. Offered every Autumn, the series examines the global challenges facing society, and the role of academia in meeting these challenges. It features public Lectures given by eminent members of staff from across and beyond the University. For more information, please see: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/about/video/lecture-series/changing-world>.

3.3 Student representation and Staff-Student Liaison Committee

We have a Sustainable Development Staff-Student Liaison Committee, which meets once per semester. This is a chance for student representatives from the degree to talk with staff about the degree, share their experiences, to discuss and feedback about any aspects of it.

Staff members at the University of Edinburgh work closely with student representatives. Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) coordinates student representation and provides training and support for student representatives across the University. The role of student representatives ('Reps') is to listen to you to identify what's working well and areas for improvement, and to ensure that your views inform strategic decisions within the subject area, School and University. The aim is to build a stronger academic community and improve your student life.

We will be looking for volunteer student representatives from each year during the first few weeks of Semester 1. These representatives attend the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings to represent and report back to their year group. The Convenor of the SSLC is Dr Sarah Parry.

3.4 Programme representatives for our School

Each academic year the School recruits Programme Representatives. These reps are the link between students and staff at programme level, ensuring that the University is continuously listening and engaging with students to improve teaching, learning, assessment, and academic services.

Schools share students' emails with their programme representatives; any student wishing to opt out from this should tell the School's Teaching Office.

4. Advice and Support

Support at University comes in many forms and from many different people and places. In SPS, the ecosystem which underpins your support comes primarily from staff (both professional services and academic), and also from students. **Please read the UG Student Handbook for further information on specific roles listed below:**

- Student Adviser
- Wellbeing Adviser
- Cohort Leads
- Student Development Office
- Peer Learning and Support (PALS)
- Student Societies

Staff are always here to help and support you during your studies; please do keep in contact with us, so that we are able to help you, and where appropriate, to direct you to the best person to provide support for you.

4.1 Pathway Liaisons

All pathways have a subject area pathway liaison. These are listed on p.1 of this handbook. Any queries relating specifically to the subject area of your pathway and academic advice specific to the pathway should be directed to them.

4.2 English language support

International Students looking for Academic English support can access this at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/international/student-life/language-support>.

Students for whom English is a second language can take the English Language Support for International Students (ELSIS) course. More details at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching>

Non-native English speakers can also use EUSA's peer proof-reading scheme: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/international/student-life/language-support/proofreading>

5. Careers

5.1 The Careers Service

Throughout your Honours years, it would be wise to give serious thought to the question of your future career.

The interdisciplinary focus of the Sustainable Development programme, and transferable skills (such as analysis and communication skills) this programme demands, will provide a solid foundation for dealing with a changing world. That breadth, flexibility, and skill-set is sought by a wide range of employers. Graduates of this programme will be well-equipped to work in a range of careers, whether SD-related or not. Members of the SD staff team may provide advice and support and often act as referees for job applications.

The University Careers Service <https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers> is located on the third floor of the Main Library Building and exists to help and advise on all matters concerning careers.

Whether you are considering employment, further study, finding an internship, travelling, volunteering, starting your own business or something else entirely the Careers Service provides a rich variety of opportunities and guidance. You might have some firm ideas at this point or no ideas whatsoever.

Careers Service activities include:

- Talks and workshops
- Several different careers fairs
- Campus visits from a wide range of employers
- Information on 1000+ careers online and in the centre
- Daily (during semester time) standard appointments for quick queries: book through [MyCareerHub](#)
- Individual guidance interviews - impartial, confidential discussions which focus on you
- Feedback on CVs, applications and personal statements
- Practice interviews - a chance to practise your skills and get feedback
- [MyCareerHub](#) database of semester-time, vacation time, one-off, voluntary and graduate vacancies in the UK and overseas
- Talks on postgraduate study
- Information on the destinations of previous graduates

5.2 Postgraduate Degrees

You may wish to consider going on to study for a postgraduate degree, either at Edinburgh University or elsewhere. Your cohort lead can provide general information and advice on this. Applications usually have to be made by around March to commence studies in the following September; applications for funding usually have earlier deadlines.

SSPS offers two kinds of postgraduate degrees: taught Master's degrees (MSc) and research-based MSc and PhD degrees. Masters programmes are completed in 12 months (full time) or 24 months (part time) and are assessed by a combination of coursework and dissertation. Further information is available at: <https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/students/postgraduate/prospective/study-at-sps>.

6. Key Contacts and Communications-Related Policies

KEY CONTACTS		
<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Email</i>
Programme Director	Dr Jacob Doherty	Jacob.Doherty@ed.ac.uk
Academic Adviser	Dr Claire Haggett	Claire.Haggett@ed.ac.uk
Student Adviser (SA)	Sue Renton	Sue.Renton@ed.ac.uk
3 rd & 4 th Year Cohort Lead	Dr Claire Haggett	Claire.Haggett@ed.ac.uk
International Exchange coordinator	Dr Isabelle Darmon	isabelle.darmon@ed.ac.uk
Geography Liaison	Dr Hannah Fitzpatrick	hannah.fitzpatrick@ed.ac.uk
PIR Liaison	Prof Elizabeth Bomberg	e.bomberg@ed.ac.uk
Social Anthropology Liaison	Dr Jacob Doherty	Jacob.Doherty@ed.ac.uk
Sociology Liaison	Dr Claire Haggett	Claire.Haggett@ed.ac.uk
STIS Liaison	Dr Sarah Parry	Sarah.Parry@ed.ac.uk

Any queries relating specifically to the subject area of your pathway and academic advice specific to the pathway should be directed to your pathway liaison.

Appendix 1: Degree Structure and Courses, by Pathway Subject

Your degree will look like this:

	Sustainable Development core courses (20 credits each)	'Pathway' subject chosen from: Social Anthropology Sociology, Geography, Politics and International Relations (20 credits)	Additional courses (20 credits)
Year 1 Sem 1	Introduction to Sustainable Development (SD1a)	Pathway core course	<i>Free choice e.g. languages, arts, second pathway subject (except Geography)</i>
Year 1 Sem 2	Science, Nature and Environment	Pathway core course	<i>Free choice e.g. languages, arts, another pathway subject</i>
Year 2 Sem 1	International Development, Aid and Humanitarianism	Pathway course	<i>Free choice e.g. languages, arts, another pathway subject</i>
Year 2 Sem 2	Perspectives on Sustainable Development (SD2a)	Pathway course	<i>Free choice e.g. languages, arts, another pathway subject</i>
Year 3 Sem 1	Responding to sustainability challenges: Critical debates	Pathway research methods course	<i>Choose from SD relevant options</i>
Year 3 Sem 2	Cases in Sustainable Development	Pathway research methods course or other options	<i>Choose from SD relevant options</i>
Year 4 Sem 1 and 2	Dissertation – 40 credits in total Pathway option courses and other courses from SD relevant options – 80 credits in total		

See the following pages for the degree structure for each different pathway subject.

Geography	p.11
Politics and International Relations	p.12
Social Anthropology	p.13
Sociology	p.14

Geography Pathway

Year	Core SD Courses	Pathway Courses	Outside Options Courses	Total Credits
1	Sustainable Development 1a: Introducing Sustainable Development (20 credits) SCIL08008 Science, Nature & Environment (20 credits) STIS08007	Human Geography (20 credits) GEGR08007 Physical Geography (20 credits) GEGR08010	40 credits of courses from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, or the College of Science and Engineering	120
2	International Development, Aid and Humanitarianism (20 credits) AFRI08001 Sustainable Development 2a: Perspectives (20 credits) SCIL08009	40 credits from: Economic and Political Geography (20 credits) GEGR08003 Global Change (20 credits) GEGR08011 Geomorphology (20 credits) GEGR08002 Social and Cultural Geography (20 credits) GEGR08004 AND Fundamental Methods in Geography (20 credits) GEGR08009	20 credits of courses from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, or the College of Science and Engineering	120
3	Responding to sustainability challenges: critical debates (20 credits) SCIL10082 Cases in Sustainable Development (20 credits) SSPS10014	Key Methods in Human Geography (20 credits) GEGR09020 Fundamentals of Research Design (20 credits) GEGR10133 OR if intending a Physical Geog dissertation: Key Methods in Physical Geography (20 credits) GEGR09018 Research Design for Physical Geography (20 credits) GEGR10131	40 credits of Level 10 courses from any subject area (up to 20 credits Geography), provided that (a) pre-requisites for that course have been met and (b) the course is linked to a sustainable development theme We advise that 20 credits should be a Geography course but this is not required. It is not possible for all 40 additional credits to be taken in Geography	120
4	Dissertation (40 credits) GEGR10053	Two Geography Honours (Level 10) courses (40 credits total*) – usually one per semester	40 credits of Level 10 courses from any subject area other than Geography, provided that (a) pre-requisites for that course have been met and (b) the course is linked to an SD theme	120

*in exceptional cases based on academic reasons, and with the permission of the Degree Programme Director, students may be able to take one less pathway course and replace this with another Sustainable Development themed course

Politics and International Relations Pathway

Year	Core SD Courses	Pathway courses	Outside Options courses	Total Credits
1	Sustainable Development 1a: Introducing Sustainable Development (20 credits) SCIL08008 Science, Nature & Environment (20 credits) STIS08007	Politics and International Relations 1A: Concepts and Debates (20 credits) PLIT08017 Politics and International Relations 1B: The Global Dimension (20 credits) PLIT08018 OR Political Thinkers (20 credits) PLIT08011	40 credits of courses from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, or the College of Science and Engineering	120
2	International Development, Aid and Humanitarianism (20 credits) AFRI08001 Sustainable Development 2a: Perspectives (20 credits) SCIL08009	Choose two (you may take all three if you wish): *Comparative Politics in a Globalized World (20 credits) PLIT08008 *Theories of International Relations (20 credits) PLIT08021 Introduction to Political Data Analysis (20 credits) PLIT08009 (you may take both if you wish)	40 credits of courses from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, or the College of Science and Engineering (20 credits if taking all three Politics and IR courses)	120
3	Responding to sustainability challenges: critical debates (20 credits) SCIL10082 Cases in Sustainable Development (20 credits) SSPS10014	Research Design in Politics and IR (20 credits) PLIT10106 Plus an additional 20 credits of Honours (Level 10) Politics and International Relations courses	40 credits of Level 10 courses from any subject area provided that (a) pre-requisites for that course have been met and (b) the course is linked to a sustainable development theme	120
4	Dissertation (40 credits) PLIT10030	40 credits* of Honours (Level 10) Politics and International Relations courses	40 credits of Level 10 courses from any subject area provided that (a) pre-requisites for that course have been met and (b) the course is linked to a sustainable development theme	120

*in exceptional cases based on academic reasons, and with the permission of the Degree Programme Director, students may be able to take one less pathway course and replace this with another Sustainable Development themed course

Social Anthropology Pathway

Year	Core SD Courses	Pathway courses	Outside Options courses	Total Credits
1	Sustainable Development 1a: Introducing Sustainable Development (20 credits) SCIL08008 Science, Nature & Environment (20 credits) STIS08007	Social Anthropology 1A: The Life Course (20 credits) SCAN08013 Social Anthropology 1B: Anthropology Matters (20 credits) SCAN08012	40 credits of courses from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, or the College of Science and Engineering	120
2	International Development, Aid and Humanitarianism (20 credits) AFRI08001 Sustainable Development 2a: Perspectives (20 credits) SCIL08009	Social Anthropology 2: Key concepts (20 credits) SCAN08011 Ethnography: Theory and Practice (20 credits) SCAN08005	40 credits of courses from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, or the College of Science and Engineering	120
3	Responding to sustainability challenges: critical debates (20 credits) SCIL10082 Cases in Sustainable Development (20 credits) SSPS10014	Imagining Anthropological Research (0 credits) SCAN10037 40 credits of Social Anthropology Honours (Level 10) courses	40 credits of Level 10 courses from any subject area provided that (a) pre-requisites for that course have been met and (b) the course is linked to a sustainable development theme	120
4	Dissertation (40 credits) SCAN10036	40 credits* of Social Anthropology Honours (Level 10) courses	40 credits of Level 10 courses from any subject area provided that (a) pre-requisites for that course have been met and (b) the course is linked to a sustainable development theme	120

*in exceptional cases based on academic reasons, and with the permission of the Degree Programme Director, students may be able to take one less pathway course and replace this with another Sustainable Development themed course

Sociology Pathway

Year	Core SD Courses	Pathway courses	Outside Options courses	Total Credits
1	<p>Sustainable Development 1a: Introducing Sustainable Development (20 credits) SCIL08008</p> <p>Science, Nature & Environment (20 credits) STIS08007</p>	<p>Sociology 1A: The Sociological Imagination: Individuals and Society (20 credits) SCIL08004</p> <p>Sociology 1B: The Sociological Imagination: Private Troubles, Public Problems (20 credits) SCIL08005</p>	40 credits of courses from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, or the College of Science and Engineering	120
2	<p>International Development, Aid and Humanitarianism (20 credits) AFRI08001</p> <p>Sustainable Development 2a: Perspectives (20 credits) SCIL08009</p>	<p>Sociology 2a: Thinking Sociologically (20 credits) SCIL08012</p> <p>Sociology 2b: Researching Social Life (20 credits) SCIL08013</p>	40 credits of courses from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, or the College of Science and Engineering	120
3	<p>Responding to sustainability challenges: critical debates (20 credits) SCIL10082</p> <p>Cases in Sustainable Development (20 credits) SSPS10014</p>	<p>Sociology Project Preparation Course (0 credits) SCIL10091</p> <p>40 credits from the following Sociology Honours courses:</p> <p>Social Theory (20 credits) SCIL10018</p> <p>Designing and Doing Social Research (20 credits) SCIL10062</p> <p>Doing Survey Research (20 credits) SCIL10063</p>	40 credits of Level 10 courses from any subject area provided that (a) pre-requisites for that course have been met and (b) the course is linked to a sustainable development theme	120
4	<p>Dissertation, which is called the 'Sociology Project' (40 credits) SCIL10045</p>	40 credits* of Honours (Level 10) Sociology courses	40 credits of Level 10 courses from any subject area provided that (a) pre-requisites for that course have been met and (b) the course is linked to a sustainable development theme	120

*in exceptional cases based on academic reasons, and with the permission of the Degree Programme Director, students may be able to take one less pathway course and replace this with another Sustainable Development themed course

Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (STIS) Pathway

Year	Core SD Courses	Pathway Courses	Outside Options Courses	Total Credits
1	Sustainable Development 1a: Introducing Sustainable Development (20 credits) SCIL08008 Science, Nature & Environment (20 credits) STIS08007	Investigating Science in Society (20 credits) STIS08008 Technology in Society (20 credits) STIS08002 OR History of Science 1 (20 credits) STIS08005	40 credits of courses from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, or the College of Science and Engineering	120
2	International Development, Aid and Humanitarianism (20 credits) AFR108001 Sustainable Development 2a: Perspectives (20 credits) SCIL08009	Environmentalism: Past and Present (20 credits) Data, Design & the City (20 credits) STIS08006	40 credits of courses from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, or the College of Science and Engineering	120
3	Responding to sustainability challenges: critical debates (20 credits) SCIL10082 Cases in Sustainable Development (20 credits) SSPS10014	20 credits of Honours (Level 10) STIS courses Research Design for Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (20 credits)	40 credits of courses from any subject area provided that (a) pre-requisites for that course have been met and (b) the course is linked to a sustainable development theme	120
4	Dissertation (40 credits)	40 credits* of Honours (Level 10) STIS courses	40 credits of courses from any subject area provided that (a) pre-requisites for that course have been met and (b) the course is linked to a sustainable development theme	120

*in exceptional cases based on academic reasons, and with the permission of the Degree Programme Director, students may be able to take one less pathway course and replace this with another Sustainable Development themed course

Appendix 2: Exam Boards, Degree Classification and Release of Results

External Examiner

The External Examiner for the degree is to be confirmed.

Board of Examiners and Release of Results

All marks for examinations and assessed coursework are provisional until confirmed by the Board of Examiners. Results will be communicated to students via the EUCLID student view. An automated email will be sent to your University email account when your course result is available

How Degrees are Classified

Honours degrees will be classified according to the overall mean mark gained, except where the mark falls on an 8 or a 9 (e.g. 58, 59), which will be regarded as 'borderline'. In such borderline cases, if 50% or more of the marks are in the class above, the student's degree will fall into that higher class.

The mean mark will be based on final overall grades (i.e. derived from all assessed work in each course) for all University of Edinburgh courses taken across your third and fourth year. **Students who spend their junior year abroad have their degree calculated solely on the basis of 4th year marks.** The mean takes account of different course weightings, so the grade you receive for a 40 credit course such as a dissertation or Project will be counted twice.

The overall mean of all course grades is not rounded up or down. For example, if your final mean grade is 57.9 then you will be awarded a 2:2. If however your mean grade is "borderline" before rounding (58.00%-59.99%) then the resolution described above is applied. Essentially, this means that if at least half of your final course grades fall into the category above the borderline, then you will be awarded the higher class of degree. For example, if the mean mark is 59 but you have achieved a grade 60 or above in at least six 20-credit courses, you would be awarded a 2:1. Note that if the mean does not fall into the borderline category then the overall profile of your marks is not considered.

All marks gained throughout fourth year are subject to confirmation and amendment at the final board of examiners at which your final degree will be determined. The examination board may also take into consideration any adverse personal circumstances affecting your Honours-level studies when determining your final degree.

For further details please see the Taught Assessment Regulations. You can access the regulations at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations>.