



**Ph.D. in Sustainable Development
MQF/EQF Level 8
Programme Description**

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| <p>Programme Outline</p> | <p>Sustainable Development is a fast-growing discipline within areas of study that complement such growth, thereby developing in tandem. It requires researchers who can collect and analyse information from multiple academic disciplines. Furthermore, they have to interpret those findings and translate their interpretation into action plans for policy and decision makers, contributing to the transformation and creation of policies and the generation of reform.</p> <p>Given that sustainability is so interdisciplinary, there is no set career path in this field, though sustainability jobs in scientific and engineering fields have certain degree and certification requirements. Those interested in sustainability may pursue careers in clean energy, technology, education, management, political science, business, international development, international relations and more. Students embarking on such careers are expected to have certain skills, competences and abilities integral to success in these fields, some of which are listed below.</p> <p>The skills, competencies and abilities that a Ph.D. graduate ought to possess in order to meet the demands of potential employers today could include (but are not limited to) the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Understand the multi/trans/interdisciplinary nature of action for sustainable development;– Systematically analyse complex systems, as a systems-thinking approach is required in order to understand drivers in the existing system;– Identify leverage points for sustainable development. Through this lens, such points may be transcribed into a call for action;– Handle and overcome the various challenges and issues inherent to sustainability research, multi/trans/interdisciplinarity, comparative sustainability research, the significance of time for sustainability research, trends in social-scientific sustainability research and researching complex sustainability issues;– Communicate with the public;– Connect with foreign colleagues in networks;– Administer projects;– Deal with and understand particular circumstances;– Negotiate with partners;– Foster cultural understanding. <p>These examples point towards a broad bundle of necessary skills, thus growing expectations of the Ph.D. student with respect to preparation for the world beyond academia. To this end, seminars and workshops in the field of Sustainable Development shall be organised. They will be a vehicle for networking between potential graduates and employers, as well as academics and other institutions in the field of Sustainable Development.</p> |
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| Course Type | Full time/Part time |
| Duration | 36-60 months Studies for the Ph.D. programme shall extend over three years of full-time study or six years of part-time study. On the recommendation of the Pegaso International's Post-Graduate Admissions Board, students may be granted an extension of studies period of up to two years in order to enable them to complete their studies, irrespective of whether they are registered on a full-time or a part-time basis. |
| Mode of Delivery | Blended learning. Total Supervision Hours approx. 180-200 hrs. Plus some blended learning; video lessons, fora etc., via web 3.0 e-learning platform, supported by the sharing of power-point presentations, course notes, course exercises, case studies, tables, graphics, published articles, multimedia, web-links, e-books, seminars and workshops: dilemma, etc. |
| Target Group | The target candidates to follow the Ph.D. programme are individuals who have already been awarded a Master's Degree, as described in detail in the section on Entry Requirements below. |
| Programme Milestones and Exit Award | The Ph.D. programme will be articulated as described below: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1- A Research Process module which reflects both the general research process and the specificities of research in sustainable development, dealing with related issues and challenges;2- Development and drafting of the research project under the guidance of a Supervisor as appointed by the Pegaso International's Post-Graduate Admissions Board;3- Writing and defence of the dissertation through a VIVA, demonstrating the original contribution to the research field of reference;4- Ph.D. candidates who fail to satisfy the conditions of the final VIVA and having exhausted any available reassessment opportunities or may, at the discretion of the Evaluation Board, be entitled to an MPhil Exit Award on condition that they have achieved and delivered more than 60% of the work expected at this level and manifested such in the form of a high-level dissertation. |
| Programme of Study | Module: The Research Process This module reflects both the general research process and the specificities of research in sustainable development, dealing with related issues and challenges. Reference will be made to the philosophy underpinning research methods and methodology with more intense familiarity with a wide scope of tools and approaches, where needed, being the subject of other studies as recommended by the Admissions Board following evaluation of the student's readiness to read for the Ph.D. Learning Outcomes Competences: By the end of the module, learners will acquire the responsibility and autonomy to: a) break the research programme down into work packages taking into |



account the challenges and issues inherent to sustainability research, multi/trans/interdisciplinarity, comparative sustainability research, the significance of time for sustainability research, trends in social-scientific sustainability research and researching complex sustainability issues;

- b) estimate the time required for each work package;
- c) develop a research programme using project management techniques, such as Gantt charts;
- d) establish milestones;
- e) handle delays, including trade-offs;
- f) produce an acceptable research proposal;
- g) make modifications to the research proposal, if required;
- h) devise a structure for the dissertation;
- i) define the scope and content of the abstract, introduction and main chapters;
- j) write the dissertation in a clear and logical way;
- k) design the dissertation so that it complies with requirements;
- l) structure the dissertation appropriately; and,
- m) appreciate what is required in the viva voce examination.

Knowledge:

By the end of the module, learners will have been exposed to:

- a) the concept of a research programme plan;
- b) challenges inherent to sustainability research, challenges of multi/trans/interdisciplinarity, comparative sustainability research, the significance of time for sustainability research, trends in social-scientific sustainability research and researching complex sustainability issues;
- c) the importance of personal progression reviews;
- d) what to do if the research programme goes wrong;
- e) the sections of the research proposal and their purpose;
- f) how these sections should link together;
- g) how to define research intentions in sufficient detail;
- h) how to describe any major hurdles to be overcome in gaining access to organisations in order to conduct the research;
- i) any ethical problems likely to arise in carrying out the research;
- j) the basic elements of style; and,
- k) the editing process and its importance.

Skills

By the end of the module, learners will acquire the following skills:

In **Applying Knowledge and Understanding**, learners will:

- a) write a dissertation no matter how challenging;
- b) handle the various challenges, overcoming the issues inherent to sustainability research, multi/trans/interdisciplinarity, comparative sustainability research, the significance of time for sustainability research, trends in social-scientific sustainability research and researching complex sustainability issues;
- c) understand what the examiners will be looking for in terms of style and presentation;
- d) start writing as soon as possible; and,



e) develop the dissertation structure.

Where **Judgment Skills and Critical Abilities** are concerned, learners will:

- a) critically analyse the findings of their secondary research;
- b) design a pilot study based on their interpretation of the findings;
- c) select an appropriate methodology;
- d) generate and interpret results;
- e) write a pilot study report;
- f) integrate the literature synthesis with the pilot study results;
- g) use the results to develop a formal theory; and,
- h) break the formal theory down into research and operational hypotheses.

Where **Module-Specific Communication Skills** are concerned, learners will:

- a) develop a working relationship with the supervisor in relation to these areas;
- b) discuss supervisor feedback with supervisor on the challenges and issues of these fields and their impact on the student's research;
- c) obtain informed consent from data subjects;
- d) communicate findings in an appropriate writing style;
- e) synthesise the literature;
- f) edit the dissertation including appraisal and updates; and,
- g) address an audience.

Where **Module-Specific Learner Skills** are concerned, learners will:

- a) address challenges, resolving issues inherent to sustainability research, multi/trans/ interdisciplinarity, comparative sustainability research, the significance of time for sustainability research, trends in social-scientific sustainability research and researching complex sustainability issues;
- b) understand the structure and content of a Master's Dissertation literature review;
- c) appreciate the relationship between the literature review and the literature synthesis;
- d) create the linkages between the literature review and the rest of the research;
- e) tap the sources of literature;
- f) perceive when a citation is required;
- g) use citations and references;
- h) maintain focus during the execution of the literature review;
- i) foster a continuing relationship with the supervisor; and,
- j) satisfy the requirement for continued progress reporting.

Where **Module-Specific Digital Skills and Competences** are concerned, learners will:

- a) use different software products and tools to search, organize, systemize and create information relevant to the research process;
- b) differentiate between software products and tools used in the collection of qualitative and quantitative data;



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| | <p>c) process qualitative and quantitative data, analysing same; and, d) select software to prepare drafts, publications, bibliography and present findings.</p> |
| Educational Objectives | <p>“With just under ten years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, world leaders at the SDG Summit in September 2019 called for a Decade of Action and delivery for sustainable development, and pledged to mobilize financing, enhance national implementation and strengthen institutions to achieve the Goals by the target date of 2030, leaving no one behind. The UN Secretary-General called on all sectors of society to mobilize a decade of action on three levels: global action to secure greater leadership, more resources and smarter solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals; local action embedding the needed transitions in the policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities; and people action, including by youth, civil society, the media, the private sector, unions, academia and other stakeholders, to generate an unstoppable movement pushing for the required transformations.”</p> <p>https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/</p> <p>This Ph.D. programme contributes to academia’s response to this call for action. For this reason, the Ph.D. in Sustainable Development is an interdisciplinary programme presenting "alternative" narratives and paradigms in contrast to the dominant meta narratives across the key areas. Students will be free to collaborate with scholars across the various disciplines on original interdisciplinary research. In so doing, students will help create new fields of inquiry that will have a wide impact in many aspects of daily life.</p> <p>In addition to the skills and competences outlined above, the programme of study is organised to attain the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Enable students to engage in advanced study and high-quality research with scholars in a variety of fields relevant to sustainability;– Foster original and scholarly research that contributes to these field/s;– Explore practice, policies, theories and new ideas relating to the field of study;– Facilitate the integration of students’ professional and educational experience with the larger problems of the professions involved in sustainability; and,– Acquire theoretical and applied knowledge of contemporary issues and develop a theoretical lens through which to perceive specific issues related to sustainability.– Systematic analysis of complex systems, as the multi/trans/interdisciplinary nature of action for Sustainable Development requires a system thinking approach in order to understand drivers in the existing system;– Identify leverage points for sustainable development. Through this lens, such points may be transcribed into a call for action. <p>In order to attain these objectives, students following the Ph.D.</p> |



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| | <p>programme are monitored closely by one or more faculty members and/or experts from related fields of study. To this end, Dilemma Workshops shall be organised wherein papers will be evaluated and students will be required to demonstrate empirical, theoretical, structural and critical capabilities.</p> |
| Supervision of Theses | <p>When accepting an application for the Ph.D. programme, Pegaso International's Post-Graduate Admissions Board shall appoint a Supervisor from among the members of the academic staff who shall be responsible for providing guidance to students. This member of staff shall have appropriate qualifications, including extensive knowledge and research experience in the broad subject area of the student, as well as current involvement in research groups.</p> |
| Language of Thesis | <p>The thesis shall be written in the English language. The Pegaso International's Post-Graduate Admissions Board may authorise the writing of the thesis in the Italian language.</p> |
| Joint Research Projects | <p>The Pegaso International's Post-Graduate Admissions Board may allow students on doctoral programmes to participate in research projects conducted under the aegis of co-tutorship agreements with foreign universities and/or institutions.</p> |
| Submission of Theses for Ph.D. programme | <p>An acceptable Ph.D. thesis, with a typical word count of 60,000-80,000 words, should contain a contribution to the knowledge base taking the following form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- an extended paper providing the basis for a book; or,- monograph of publishable standard on the topic related to the student's own research field. <p>Guidelines on publication and publishers form the subject of workshops organised for Ph.D. students to this effect. Once the Supervisor is satisfied that the thesis is close to completion and is of the required standard, the Supervisor will request the formation of the Evaluation Board.</p> <p>On the day of the defence, the Ph.D. candidate is expected to prepare and give a presentation lasting, approximately, 20 minutes. The Evaluation Board will then pose their questions (the Supervisor will be the last one to ask his/her questions). A general debate may follow. At the end of the discussion, the Evaluation Board meets privately to deliberate on the outcome of the <i>viva</i>. The final evaluations as discussed and agreed upon among the members of the Evaluation Board, are then announced to the candidates.</p> |
| Suspension of Studies | <p>On the recommendation of the Pegaso International's Post-Graduate Admissions Board students may be allowed, for a good and sufficient reason, to suspend their studies for a maximum period of 12 months, irrespective of whether they are registered on a full-time or a part-time basis. In such cases, the period of suspension of studies shall not be taken into consideration for calculating the period of registration for the Ph.D. programme in terms of the duration requirement.</p> |
| Ph.D. termination and withdrawal | <p>Students may terminate or withdraw from the Ph.D. programme strictly within, and no later than, 15 days from the date of receipt of their personal access credentials.</p> <p>Should a termination request be received beyond the established</p> |



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| | <p>deadline, students shall still exercise the right to terminate or withdraw from the course but the amount paid will be withheld and will not be refunded.</p> <p>The above-mentioned request may be accepted only if the payments records are up to date of the year of attendance, effective from the commencement of the Ph.D. programme.</p> <p>Failure to access the e-learning platform shall not exempt students from the payment of the tuition fee.</p> |
| Application schedule and procedure | <p>Applications and all required documents must be submitted via the online application form at the following link: https://pegasointernational.eu/courses/eng/sustainable-development</p> <p>Applications may be submitted at any time of the year but eligible candidates shall be registered with effect from one of the following dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1st October- 1st February- 1st June <p>For registration to be effective from any of the above dates, candidates must submit their applications one month prior to the registration schedule of interest as indicated below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 31st August for registration on 1st October;- 30th December for registration on 1st February;- 30th April for registration on 1st June. <p>For each registration period, a total of 30 Ph.D. places are available. Applications exceeding this number will be evaluated for the next available registration period.</p> <p>The Pegaso International's Post-Graduate Admissions Board reserves the right to assess for admission additional applications where the research proposals of academic and strategic relevance for Pegaso International are concerned.</p> |
| Entry Requirements | <p>Candidates shall possess a Master's degree (EQF/MQF level 7) in any area deemed relevant by the Pegaso International's Post-Graduate Admissions Board.</p> <p>Candidates should have proficiency in English or Italian language.</p> <p>Candidates applying for this Ph.D. programme are expected to hold basic IT skills and appropriate research skills and competences. Such skills are considered to be a pre-requisite for this Ph.D. programme. Candidates unable to meet the aforementioned IT requirements, are invited to follow separate dedicated courses to gain such skills.</p> <p>Hence, recommendations of the Pegaso International's Post-Graduate Admissions Board may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A minimum of three (3) years' work experience in an area related to the research to be carried out by the candidate;- Reading a course in Research Methods and Research Methodology to ensure and update necessary competences in this area;- Follow a course in ICT to ensure and update the relevant and applicable skills; |



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Following a course in language skills;- An evaluation exercise via interview will establish the readiness for remote (on-line) supervision of individual candidates, especially for candidates who have been considered and who have completed previous degrees in face-to-face mode. |
| Language Requirements | <p>Candidates are expected to hold at least a B2 English language level of the CEFR- Common European Framework of Reference and submit the relevant language certification.</p> <p>Candidates unable to meet the aforementioned language requirements, are invited to follow separate dedicated courses to gain such skills.</p> |
| Required Documents | <p>Candidates shall submit their application online, attaching the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update CV• Research proposal of approximately 1000 words (See below)• Degree qualification certificates and transcript(s) as provided by the issuing Institution• International English language certificate• Copy of a valid identity document (such as passport or ID card)• Receipt of payment as application fee <p>Note that attachments must be in PDF using standard international fonts. Do not use macros, special characters, password-protected attachments or electronic signatures.</p> <p>Pegaso International reserves the right to verify the authenticity of the certificates provided with the competent issuing authorities.</p> |
| Research Proposal | <p>Ph.D. candidates are to submit an outline of the research proposal (of approximately 1000 words) that is pertinent to the Ph.D. programme disciplines and areas of study.</p> <p>The research proposal, to be filled out online along with the application, shall include the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research Title• Main area of study being proposed• Personal Motivation for the Choice of Research Theme• Outline of Literature and Theoretical Frameworks or Propositions• Aim of the research• Research Methods for Data Collection and Analysis• Expected results and contribution of the research. |
| Selection criteria and procedures | <p>Eligible candidates shall be evaluated according to the following academic criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic record: Candidates are expected to have sufficient background in theory and research methodology relevant to their discipline and research project as stipulated in the entry requirements above. Candidates unable to meet the aforementioned research methodology requirements, should follow a separate course in Research Methods in Social Sciences with Pegaso International to gain such skills.• Quality of the research proposal: The originality and feasibility of a Ph.D. proposal play a crucial role for Pegaso International. Applicants for the Sustainable Development Ph.D. programme are to provide a short research statement of 1000 words rather than a |



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| | <p>full research proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential supervision: The Pegaso International's Post-Graduate Admissions Board carefully examines whether it can provide suitable supervision for the candidate, taking into account the profile of the applicant and distribution of supervision among its academic staff for the entire period concerned.• Language abilities: All candidates should have a good knowledge of English. The expected minimum level of English language proficiency is B2 of the CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference. <p>Candidates whose application complies with the requirements stated in sections Entry Requirements, Language Requirements and Required Documents, will be admitted for an interview with the Pegaso International's Post-Graduate Admissions Board in order to assess the above selection criteria.</p> <p>The interviews schedule will be notified to the eligible candidates via email at the email address provided by each candidate on the application form.</p> |
| <p>Further Information</p> | <p>On completion of the Ph.D. programme, students will be aware of the normative aspects of Sustainable Development as a discipline, its methodological cornerstones, and its relation to other social sciences, humanities and the arts.</p> <p>On completion of the Ph.D. programme, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- establish discourse with stakeholders on the leverage points identified to generate sustainability;- transcribe and disseminate findings through a call for action;- give clear and accurate presentations, orally as well as scripted, in a style appropriate for purpose;- construct and make coherent arguments to different audiences, formally and/or informally through a variety of techniques;- present and defend original research outcomes which extend the forefront of a discipline or relevant area of professional practice;- justify and defend research results in a constructive way at conferences, workshops, seminars, etc.;- articulate ideas clearly so as to justify specific research projects to funding authorities;- promote public awareness and understanding of a specific area or field of research;- effectively support and direct the learning of others when involved in teaching;- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the underlying theories governing the epistemology underpinning sustainability;- master and synthesize the core methods necessary to systematically analyse complex systems in applying knowledge and understanding and learning skills in the field of sustainable development;- contribute to the knowledge base governing the epistemology underpinning sustainability through research;- demonstrate systematic and extensive knowledge of the subject |



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| | <p>area and expertise in generic and subject/professional skills;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- discover, interpret and communicate new knowledge through original research and/or scholarship of publishable quality which satisfies peer review;- exhibit judgement skills in the identification of leverage points for Sustainable Development within and across the relevant fields;- perform critical analysis and empirical research;- manifest autonomy and responsibility by taking a proactive and self-reflective role in working and to develop professional relationships with others, where appropriate, in the field of sustainable development;- independently and proactively formulate ideas and hypotheses and design, develop, implement and execute plans by which to evaluate these; and- critically and creatively evaluate current issues, research and advanced scholarship in the discipline. |
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