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## REPORT

### Best Practices Derived from the Top 10 Master Programs in Sustainability Management of EU Universities

**Introduction.** Education shapes people's futures. To stay relevant, schools must evolve and offer programs that resonate with today's learners. Studying top educational programs helps in this evolution.

One key advantage of studying top programs is learning best practices. Successful programs offer insights into effective teaching methods, curriculum design, and assessment strategies. By understanding what works elsewhere, schools can design programs that incorporate these successful elements.

Staying updated is another benefit. The educational landscape is ever-changing, with new technologies and methods emerging. Top programs often incorporate the latest trends, so studying them helps schools stay current.

Comparing with top programs also highlights areas for improvement. Schools can see where they might be lacking and work on those areas. This comparison ensures that students receive a comprehensive education.

Moreover, studying top programs promotes evidence-based development. It provides a clear picture of what's effective in education, guiding the creation of new programs.

To understand best practices in sustainable management education, we've chosen 10 top programs from the QS Ranking by Subject (Table 1, Table 2).

**Table 1. Top 10 QS EU University Rankings by Subject 2023: Social Sciences & Management**

QS worldwide university ranking			University	Location
2023	2022	2021		
14	10	16	Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi	Italy
29	23	29	University of Amsterdam	Netherlands
48	36	36	Erasmus University Rotterdam	Netherlands
51	44	41	HEC Paris	France
55	59	71	University of Navarra	Spain
59	56	62	Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne	France
65	62	75	University Bologna	Italy
68	48	64	KU Leuven	Belgium
74	65	56	Sciences Po- Paris School of International Affairs – PSIA	France
80	53	51	Copenhagen Business School	Denmark

**Table 2. Programs Description**

University	Program Description	Duration	Language
<p><b>Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi</b></p>	<p>The <b>Master in Sustainability and Energy Management</b> at the University of Bologna is a postgraduate program that provides students with the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue a career in sustainable energy management. The program is designed for students who want to learn about the latest trends and innovations in the field of sustainable energy, with a focus on the management of energy resources.</p> <p>The program is structured into three modules: the first module focuses on energy and environmental management, the second module covers renewable energy technologies and applications, and the third module is dedicated to energy planning and management. Students will have the opportunity to learn about topics such as sustainable development, energy efficiency, climate change, energy policy, and renewable energy systems. The program is taught by experienced professors and industry professionals who bring real-world experience to the classroom. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in field trips and site visits to companies and organizations that are leading the way in sustainable energy management, corporate sustainability, energy and environment. Every year the Master attracts several leading companies, agencies and NGOs who deliver presentations, exposing our students to their potential employers.</p> <p>It is the first Specialized Master program at Bocconi to have introduced the use of wireless devices (e.g. laptop or tablet) and advanced and interactive academic software as well as webinars in the classroom, in order to enhance the student learning experience. Therefore, all students will be required to bring their own wireless device for class work.</p> <p>Upon completion of the program, students will have gained the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue a career in a wide range of industries, including energy consulting firms, energy utilities, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. Graduates of the program will be able to apply their knowledge to create sustainable energy solutions that benefit both society and the environment. Specific Courses: CSR and Corporate Sustainability, Energy Economics, Environmental Economics, Sustainable Strategies, The Economics of Renewables and Energy Saving Technologies, Environmental Law, Geopolitics and Energy Transition, Corporate Finance for Green Business.</p>	<p>12 months</p>	<p>English</p>

University	Program Description	Duration	Language
<b>University of Amsterdam</b>	<p>The <b>Research Master International Development Studies</b> at the University of Amsterdam is an interdisciplinary program that prepares students for research-oriented careers in the field of international development. The program provides a comprehensive understanding of development issues, policies, and practices, with a focus on critical analysis and innovative research methods and sustainable development.</p> <p>The program is designed for students who have completed a Bachelor's degree in a related field, such as social sciences, economics, political science, or anthropology. Students will take courses in research methodology, development theory, and substantive issues in development, such as poverty, inequality, sustainability, and globalization.</p> <p>The program attracts a diverse student body from all over the world. Students will have the opportunity to engage in research projects with international organizations, NGOs, and research institutes, gaining hands-on experience in the field of development.</p> <p>During the second year of the programme, students conduct sustained independent study for the master thesis. This is usually done with fieldwork. Also during this time, students complete their individual portfolio (see below) which is made up of personally tailored professional and academic activities. The Portfolio component of the programme is a distinctive feature that offers significant value to students. It is self-directed and accounts for 15 EC in the course. Students have the flexibility to construct an academic or professional profile, or a blend of both, that will equip them for further study or entry into the workforce. The Portfolio is undertaken concurrently with field research and can include diverse activities such as research or professional internships.</p> <p>After completing the thesis students prepare an academic article based on their thesis in collaboration with their supervisor, and design a final "communication product" to share the most relevant points of their research with key stakeholder groups.</p> <p>Upon completion of the program, graduates will have the skills and knowledge to pursue doctoral studies in development studies or related fields, or to work in research and policy positions in international development organizations, government agencies, or academia.</p> <p>Specific Courses: Sustainable and Inclusive Economics; Education, Development and Social Justice; Urban Perspectives in Development; Environment, Development and Conflict; Critical Development Theory and Social Movement</p>	24 months	English

University	Program Description	Duration	Language
<b>Erasmus University Rotterdam</b>	<p>The <b>MSc in Global Business &amp; Sustainability</b> program is designed to provide students with knowledge, skills and attitude for meaningful careers in a new paradigm of business such as creating new business solutions to tackle a real societal problem, and pitch it to a multi-stakeholder jury. The elective portfolio is updated annually to reflect the fast-changing business sustainability landscape, and is closely connected with practice.</p> <p>The program curriculum covers a wide range of topics, including sustainable supply chain management, corporate social responsibility, sustainable finance, sustainable marketing, and environmental management. In addition to these core topics, students can choose from a variety of elective courses to tailor the program to their individual interests and career goals. Core courses are compulsory and will be offered during the autumn semester (26 EC). Master electives (18 EC) are offered during the spring semester, of which one elective can be chosen from another MSc program. During the year, students work on a master thesis project (16 EC).</p> <p>Students understand organizations embedded within sustainable socio-ecological systems. They learn tools and frameworks that enable applying knowledge to create sustainability solutions. Also, students discover how all of this works in practice through extensive alumni network of global change makers including CEOs, governmental politicians, professors and social entrepreneurs. Students also have the opportunity to participate in a range of extracurricular activities, such as sustainability-themed conferences, guest lectures, and networking events.</p> <p>Learn strong analytical and problem-solving skills – supported by interactive learning such as simulations, live business cases and role-plays – and develop interpersonal skills such as negotiation, presenting and working on interdisciplinary projects.</p> <p>Upon completion of the program, graduates will have a deep understanding of the interplay between sustainability and business, as well as the skills and knowledge required to drive sustainable business practices in a global context. Graduates of the program are well-positioned to pursue careers in a range of industries, including consulting, finance, marketing, and supply chain management, among others.</p> <p>Specific Courses: Sustainability Leadership &amp; Planetary Boundaries, Global Business Strategies, Sustainability Ethics, Sustainable Behavior, Research Methodology I, Personal Career Narrative, Sustainability Grand Challenges.</p>	12 months	English

University	Program Description	Duration	Language
HEC Paris	<p>The <b>MSc Sustainability and Social Innovation</b> program at HEC Paris is designed to prepare students for leadership roles in sustainable and socially responsible organizations. The program focuses on the intersection of business, society, and the environment, and provides students with the tools and knowledge to develop sustainable solutions to complex social and environmental challenges.</p> <p>The program is divided into three modules, each of which focuses on a specific aspect of sustainability and social innovation. The first module provides a foundation in sustainability theory and business strategy, and covers topics such as sustainability reporting, environmental management, and sustainable development. The second module focuses on social innovation and covers topics such as social entrepreneurship, social impact assessment, and corporate social responsibility. The third module is dedicated to sustainability leadership and covers topics such as stakeholder engagement, sustainable finance, and ethical leadership.</p> <p>Students have the opportunity to apply to the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH) in order to get an MSc in Economics &amp; Business Administration, with a Major in Energy, Natural Resources and the Environment (double-degree program).</p> <p>Every year, students go on a study trip to witness sustainable development issues and to study the measures already implemented or those to be developed. The study trip will take place in France or in a neighboring country. The objective is to understand how local public and private organizations are responding to current societal and environmental challenges.</p> <p>Specific Courses: The Changing Business Environment, Design Thinking for Innovation, Climate, resources and governance, Social Innovation, Socially Responsible Investing (ESG), Sustainable Operations Management, Strategy for Sustainability: Shaping Innovative Business Models, Data Science for Sustainable Business, Sustainable Corporate Finance, Decarbonization and climate strategies for organizations, Energy Management in the Company, Ecological accounting: from the organization to the ecosystem, Systemic Shocks &amp; Sustainable Development, Sustainable Urban Development: Key Strategic and Organizational Challenges</p>	12 months	English

University	Program Description	Duration	Language
<b>University Navarra</b>	<p>The <b>Master's in Environmental Building Design and Management</b> program teaches students how to measure the effectiveness of environmental measures implemented in buildings to minimize their impact on the environment. To assess the actual behavior of buildings, students use simulation software and monitoring tools such as sensors, dataloggers, thermo-flowmeters, blower doors, and thermographic cameras.</p> <p>The program has a close connection with the research projects of the Department of Construction, Installations, and Structures at the School of Architecture. Additionally, it collaborates with other national and international research groups, making it a training program that incorporates the latest advances and outcomes in environmental technologies and innovations related to building design and management.</p> <p>The program made up of four modules, three of which - the Sustainable design, Internship and work End of Master's Degree- are compulsory. In addition, a fourth module is optional, which will allow you to choose between an intensification in Advanced Sustainable design or in management of Companies. In the module of design Advanced Sustainable , the aspects related to the design and the sustainable quantification of buildings are studied in depth, preparing the student to face advanced simulation, monitoring and testing of buildings, new materials and construction systems, new sustainable certification systems. The module of management of companies, which will intensify the training in management of companies, directing the student in the acquisition of knowledge oriented to the professional activity, from general questions of business and project management. As the field of design and management of environmental buildings becomes more globally-focused, the MDGAE program aims to provide students with an international professional profile. This is facilitated through an international placement opportunity where students can train at a university or technology center abroad, specifically in the United Kingdom or Germany. Furthermore, students who complete the advanced course in sustainability will have an additional chance to train at an internationally renowned university in addition to the placement during the sustainable design module.</p> <p>The completion of the Final Project Master's Degree (TFM) in companies within the sector is a vital aspect of the MDGAE student's training internship. This provides a unique opportunity to apply all the knowledge and skills gained during the program in a real-life setting. By completing the TFM at a company, students can experience the professional reality, acquire the necessary professional skills that can improve their employability, and develop their entrepreneurial capacity.</p> <p>Specific Courses: Principles of Sustainability, Energy management. Passive measures, Energy and water management. Active measures, Materials and waste management, Environmental certification, Management of other environmental aspects</p>	12 months	Spanish, English

University	Program Description	Duration	Language
<b>Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne</b>	<p><b>Master Biodiversity Territory Environment</b> provides students with advanced knowledge and skills in the fields of biodiversity, territorial management, and environmental sustainability. This pertains to current issues regarding the scientific and practical aspects of managing biodiversity in a given area, whether in the public or private sector. This encompasses projects aimed at conserving and managing biodiversity and promoting coexistence with living organisms. Examples of such projects include large infrastructure development, as well as urban and rural development. The program consists of two modules: from the definition of biodiversity to its implementation in projects; from the concept of a biodiversity project to its implementation. The program is aimed at students who have a strong interest in ecology, environmental science, and sustainability, and who want to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to become experts in these areas. Students in the Master BIOTERRE program will have the opportunity to study a wide range of topics, including biodiversity conservation, ecological management, environmental policy, sustainable development, and more. They will also have the opportunity to participate in field trips and other practical activities that will allow them to apply their knowledge in real-world situations. Specific Courses: Biodiversity in the field of different disciplines; Biodiversity dynamics and diagnostics; Project design and biodiversity; Project management, operation, rehabilitation and biodiversity</p>	12 months	English, French
<b>University Bologna</b>	<p>The <b>Executive Master in Sustainability and Business Innovation</b> aims to equip professionals with the skills and tools needed to lead sustainability, circular economy, and social innovation processes within their organizations. It includes 10 courses that cover general management, sustainability, and business innovation, with each module containing courses, focus sessions, and opportunities to exchange ideas with industry professionals. Participants will also visit leading companies for sustainability and network with partners of Bologna Business School. Classroom activities include traditional lectures, case studies, and accounts from corporate professionals. There are also three workshops that analyze key aspects of sustainability, social innovation, and circular economy with university professors, managers, and professionals. Additionally, there are 25 weeks of distance learning, during which participants will study course materials, complete exercises, discuss company cases, and exchange views with colleagues and educational tutors on the school's e-learning platform. The program also includes two company visits, which provide an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas with managers and entrepreneurs in the field. Furthermore, there are four or more evening meetings with company managers who share their managerial experiences with the participants. Specific Courses: Operations &amp; Industry 4.0, Business Ethics and Stakeholder Theory, Business and Global Strategy, Circular Economics and Value Chain, Social Innovation, Sustainable Finance, Measuring Sustainable Performance, Marketing for Sustainability, SDGs, From Corporate Social Responsibility to Creating Shared Value and the B Corp model, Intro to Climate Change</p>	12 months	Italian



University	Program Description	Duration	Language
<p><b>KU Leuven</b></p>	<p><b>Master's of Science in Sustainable Development</b> program offers a transversal core programme on sustainable development and two tracks of specialisation: a Space &amp; Society track and an Ecology track. The distinctive strength of this master's programme is an interdisciplinary character that bridges societal and ecological sustainability challenges while engaging with real-world settings, localities and communities.</p> <p>The common core involves the building up and integration of fundamental expertise in sustainable development, including theory, methodology and practical applications in both ecology and social science. It comprises academic levelling training, courses covering different sustainability aspects, the formulation of an individual research portfolio, as well as a field trip in the Global South, an internship and a thesis.</p> <p>The Space &amp; Society track focuses on the societal component of sustainability transition, including social, economic, political and cultural dimensions.</p> <p>The Ecology track focuses on both the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of biodiversity at all organizational levels (species, genes and ecosystems). Integration between both tracks will mainly be done through sustainable development practice at the local community level.</p> <p>A major methodological innovation introduced by this program is the Sustainable Development Living Lab, a mobile platform through which the ICP community applies sustainability knowledge to problems of the Global South. The lab connects students, staff from the KU Leuven and Global South partner institutions from Africa, Asia and Latin America, but also practitioners and policy-makers, NGOs, representatives of the private sector, among others. This program trains future sustainability leaders acquainted with the necessary interdisciplinary knowledge, skills and methodologies to address and solve intertwined socio-ecological challenges hindering the construction of more sustainable paths of development. The entire program has a genuine focus on actions to remediate enduring unsustainabilities.</p> <p>Specific Courses: Introduction to Geoprocessing, Introduction to Cartography, The Sustainable Development Challenge, Academic Leveling: Space, Society and Ecology, Geography of Development, Global Change, Ecosystems and Sustainability, Current Topics in Conservation Biology, Fieldwork in the Global South</p>	<p>24 months</p>	<p>English</p>

University	Program Description	Duration	Language
<b>Sciences Po</b>	<p>The <b>Master in Environmental Policy</b> is a multidisciplinary program that aims to prepare a new generation of professionals such as policy makers, project managers, analysts, and auditors who can address environmental issues globally. The program covers the fundamental concepts in environmental sciences and techniques, which enable students to comprehend the primary constraints in policy-making and strategic decision-making processes in the public and private sectors. Program consists of thematic blocks: Environmental Economics, Sciences and Policies, Climate, Environmental Governance, Sustainable Finance, Environmental Management.</p> <p>The curriculum of the program includes introductory classes on earth sciences, climate change, and biodiversity that focus on sustainable development and environmental issues. The program aims to equip students with the skills required to analyze and understand public and private strategies on environmental and sustainable development issues. Moreover, students develop their analytical skills to serve as mediators between scientists, private operators, managers, or public officials. The program emphasizes practical and technical skills in policy and project design, risk analysis, project management, auditing, policy design, management, and evaluation in fields like environment, health, nutrition, and more.</p> <p>The program provides training in the latest methods for studying biodiversity, climate change, and the 'Earth system' such as ecology, climatology, modelling, etc. It also introduces students to the legal, economic, and social aspects of sustainable development.</p> <p>Specific Courses: Introduction to Environmental Economics; Natural Resource Economics; From Climate Science to Climate Intervention?; Climate Change: Causes and Consequences; Major Oceanic Environmental Challenges: a Multi-Disciplinary Scientific Perspective; Ecological Science and Nature based Solutions: Issues and Challenges; Critical Political Ecology of Water; Climate Geopolitics: International Relations in a Warming World; Dilemmas of Energy Transitions; Decarbonization and Renewable Sources; European Energy Policies.</p>	24 months	English

University	Program Description	Duration	Language
<p><b>Copenhagen Business School</b></p>	<p>The <b>MSc in Sustainable Tropical Forestry</b> offers a comprehensive introduction to the subject matter and culminates in the Sustainable Tropical Forestry School, which involves fieldwork in a developing country. The first year of study is completed at one of three partner institutions: University of Copenhagen, Bangor University, or Technische Universität Dresden. The primary goals for the initial year of the SUTROFOR program are multifaceted. Firstly, it aims to provide students with a solid foundation of fundamental knowledge related to the principles and procedures that underpin sustainable tropical forestry development. This knowledge will take into account the social and environmental factors that impact this field, providing a well-rounded education.</p> <p>Secondly, the program seeks to enhance students' theoretical and practical skills in a variety of areas, including numeracy, communication, information technology, teamwork, self-management, and professional development. By doing so, students will be well-equipped to succeed in their future careers in the context of tropical forestry.</p> <p>Finally, the program aims to instill the values of scholarship in its students. This includes fostering a sense of inquisitiveness, introspection, honesty, open-mindedness, evidence-based reasoning, and cooperation. By doing so, SUTROFOR hopes to produce graduates who not only possess the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed but who also embody the values necessary to make a positive impact in the field of sustainable tropical forestry development.</p> <p>Students can opportunity to select a specialization to be completed at a different partner institution, meaning they cannot complete both years of study at the same institution. Specializations offered include Forests and livelihoods in developing countries (Copenhagen), Agroforestry systems (Bangor), Tropical forest management (Dresden), Environmental management and policies for tropical forests (Montpellier), and Social and environmental responsibility in tropical forestry (Padova). The Montpellier specialization is offered in French and requires proficiency in the French language. Specialization "Forests and livelihoods in developing countries" focuses on natural forests and participatory management, a comprehensive understanding of economics. Agroforestry systems program aims to educate individuals on the fundamental principles and procedures that form the basis of agroforestry. Program "Tropical forest management" specializes on forest plantations and urban forestry. Specialization "Environmental management and policies for tropical forests" studies interactions between human and biophysical processes that drive structure and functioning of tropical forests from the local to global scales, and are able to implement or appraise environmental actions targeted at tropical forest ecosystems. Specialization "Social and environmental responsibility in tropical forestry" is dedicated to main theoretical concepts, international framework and practical tools related to ethics in forestry.</p> <p>Specific Courses: Climate Change and Forestry: monitoring and policies, Preparing Field Work in the Tropics, Sustainable Tropical Forestry School.</p>	<p>24 months</p>	<p>English</p>