

New From 2026

Sustainability

BSc (Honours)

DEGREE AWARD

(NFQ Level 8)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Sustainability BSc at UCC

Sustainability is the defining challenge — and opportunity — of our time. It is about creating thriving societies and economies within the limits of our planet's resources. From tackling climate change and biodiversity loss to building fairer communities and circular economies, sustainability is about driving transformative change for people and the planet.

This interdisciplinary degree gives you the tools to understand complex global challenges, work across disciplines, and put knowledge into action.

WHY UCC?

Global leadership: UCC is ranked among the world's top "green universities" and was the first to achieve a Green Flag and a Gold STARS rating.

Living lab: Cork and UCC's campus are testbeds for real-world sustainability solutions in energy, climate, food and communities.

Research excellence: Learn from leading experts in sustainability, climate science, law, culture, and business across four UCC colleges.

Hands-on experience: Engage with sustainability challenges through local projects, international field trips, work placement or study abroad.

UCC integrates sustainability across education, research, and campus operations. Cork is a vibrant, forward-thinking city that actively engages with climate adaptation, renewable energy, and sustainable urban development. UCC provides a dynamic setting for hands-on sustainability learning. Here, you will benefit from cutting-edge sustainability research and strong connections to local government, industry, and community organisations.

WHAT WILL HELP YOU?

Mathematics, English, Geography, Business, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Religious Education, and History are helpful subjects for this course.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Year 1: Common foundation in sustainability science, society and culture, business and circular economy.

Modules include:

- Planetary Boundaries and Grand Challenges
- Ethics and Environmental Justice
- Global Development
- Introduction to Climate Action, Society and Culture, and Business streams

Years 2-4: Specialise in one of three thematic streams to develop disciplinary skills:

1. **Sustainability, Science and Climate Action** (College of Science, Engineering and Food Science): Develop deeper knowledge and skills in environmental and climate science; microbiology and ecology; computer and data science, and food, energy and industrial systems.
2. **Sustainability, Society and Culture** (College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences): Focus on the societal, cultural and ethical dimensions of sustainability. It will equip you to understand the impact of climate change on individuals and society, to gain employment in areas concerned with social policy, heritage, education, the public sector, and communications.
3. **Sustainable Business and Circular Economy** (College of Business and Law): specialise in the economic dimensions of sustainability and more specifically how businesses can pursue more sustainable business models and practices.

All students take **core modules** in law, health, political economy, leadership, and transformative change.

Opportunities include:

- International field trip (Year 3)
- Work placement or study abroad (Year 3)
- Capstone project (Year 4)

Within each year, you can decide to take **elective** modules from a broad choice of subjects from across the university.

Entry Requirements

- Leaving Certificate: Minimum H5 in two subjects and O6/H7 in three others (including English, Irish) and O2/H6 in Maths
- Other pathways: QQI FET, Mature Applicants, International Students



www.ucc.ie/en/sustainability

More Info





WORK PLACEMENT

In Year 3, you will have the option to complete a 6-month industry work placement (January–June) in Ireland or abroad. Placements are offered across sectors, including local authorities, government agencies, NGOs, research institutes and companies working on renewable energy, circular economy, sustainability reporting, and more. During placement, you will apply what you learn in real-world contexts, gain professional networks, and develop transferable skills such as problem-solving, teamwork and communication.



STUDY ABROAD

Study abroad options are available in the third year, either for the second semester or for the entire year. If you wish to study abroad in a non-English speaking environment, you may take the necessary language modules as part of your chosen electives in Years 1 and 2.



CAPSTONE PROJECT

A capstone project in Year 4 will provide you with the opportunity to apply the core theoretical knowledge and disciplinary skills developed from Years 1-3. You will be addressing a sustainability problem drawn from the local community, industry, policy, and relating the issue to the global context, such as putting knowledge into action, from local to global and identifying challenges; developing solutions across planet, society and economy.



CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

As a graduate, you will be equipped for careers in:

- Sustainability consulting and corporate responsibility
- Climate policy and international development
- Community engagement and leadership
- Renewable energy and circular economy industries
- NGOs, local authorities and government agencies
- Research and further study (MSc/PhD pathways)



GRADUATE STUDY OPTIONS

Depending on the stream, graduates can progress to a broad range of topics. Please refer to the UCC postgraduate prospectus as a wide range of environmental postgraduate study options are available at both Master's and PhD levels, for example:

- Sociology of Sustainability and Global Challenges
- Sustainability in Enterprise (Online)
- Law LLM (Environmental and Natural Resources Law)

For examples of the type of research ongoing across UCC, see the Sustainability Institute: www.ucc.ie/en/sustainability



Fun Facts

- UCC was the **first university in the world** to be awarded a Green Flag for sustainability
- Cork is one of Europe's **100 "Mission Cities"** leading the transition to climate neutrality by 2030
- Sustainability is so in demand that **90% of guidance counsellors** surveyed said students would choose this degree

Course Director Prof. Hannah Daly

"Sustainability is the defining challenge - and opportunity - of our time. To secure a thriving future for both people and the planet, we must go beyond theory and put sustainability into action. This programme equips students with the skills, knowledge, and mindset needed to drive meaningful change."



Associate Vice-President of Sustainability, UCC Prof. Brian O'Gallachoir

"Sustainability is both a core value and ambition for UCC. We are globally leading in areas of sustainability research and are currently ranked in 4th place globally on sustainability practice according to the UI Green Metric. This ambitious new programme provides students with a wonderful opportunity to immerse themselves in sustainability but also to push us to go further on this important and exciting journey to a better future."

