# Programme Specification

Award and title: PGCert/PGDip/MSc Sustainability in Agriculture and Business

Table 1: Programme Details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Department/s | Rural Land Use |
| Board/s of studies: | Agriculture and Business Management |
| Faculty/ies: | North |
| Awarding institution/body: | University of Glasgow |
| Delivery home: | Craibstone (DL) |
| Partnerships: | NA |
| Programme/s accredited by: | NA |
| UCAS code / other code: | NA |
| Interim and final exit awards with SCQF level and credits: | PGCert, SCQF level 11, 60 taught SCQF credit points  PGDip, SCQF level 11, 120 taught SCQF credit points  MSc, SCQF level 11, 180 SCQF credit points |
| QAA subject benchmark statement/s | QAA Subject Benchmark Statement 2019 for Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services.  QAA 2020 Characteristics Statement for master’s degrees.  Scottish Government 2023 Commission for the  Land-Based Learning Review. |
| Mode/s of study: | Part time online distance learning:  1 year PGCert  2 years PGDip  3 years MSc  University of Glasgow restrictions on completion of four years for PGCert and PGDip, and six years for MSc. |
| Date of creation/revision: | Mar 2018/revised Jan 2023 |

# Introduction and Special Features

With agriculture accounting for 38% of the global land surface, there is increasing interest in finding sustainable solutions for future agricultural development. Different agricultural production models contribute to a variety of environmental, social and economic goals and aim to limit the trade-offs between productivity and sustainability of land use.

This postgraduate qualification will provide a grounding in sustainable agricultural systems, natural capital and enterprise, examining and critiquing different models of production. The programme will provide students with opportunities to develop both production relevant skills in soil, crop and livestock management, and business, communication and entrepreneurship skills, immersing them in real world applications relevant to future employment. The programme taps into the need for sustainable management of land and water resources, supporting biodiversity and working to address societal challenges and will typically be based on one to three years part time online distance learning in a format that offers flexible progression routes from PGCert to PGDip and MSc, thus enabling students in employment and with different life circumstances to achieve their optimum level of award.

The full taught programme consists of eight modules, comprising four core modules (two in Year 1 and two in Year 2) coupled with a choice of elective modules. Students will acquire specific skills relevant to the subject area and will also develop valuable academic and work-related skills leading to enhanced personal development and employability. MSc students (Year 3) will carry out an in-depth independent research project enabling them to pursue their own interests and develop the skills of specific relevance to current and future careers.

# Programme Profile

### Programme Aim(s)

The programme provides the context for graduates to develop skills in evaluating evidence and extracting information relevant to critiquing agricultural systems within the evolving contemporary political and regulatory framework. The programme will future proof learning, using authentic real world applications to equip graduates with technical and professional knowledge relevant to sustainable agricultural systems and businesses, and the skills to utilise this knowledge to adapt to changing environments, solve problems and propose solutions to contemporary and future issues faced by agriculture. Personalised learning journeys will be achieved via tailored assessment allowing students the opportunity to centre their learning experience on personal preference, opportunity or experience.

### Programme Learning Outcomes

On completion of this programme, graduates will be able to:

PGCert/PGDip/MSc

1. Identify, evaluate and recommend evidence-based solutions to solve complex problems in sustainable agriculture contexts.
2. Evaluate and drive the development of personal skills, attributes and professional behaviour.
3. Develop in depth knowledge of the main theories, principles and concepts related to sustainable farming systems and apply to relevant real-world scenarios.
4. Integrate a range of communication skills relevant to agricultural challenges, adapting communication styles for different people, situations and audiences.

In addition, PGDip/MSc

1. Gather, manage and evaluate quantitative and/or qualitative data, using appropriate tools to draw conclusions from it.
2. Synthesise and critique information, recognising reliability of sources in establishing current understanding, identifying research questions and proposing solutions in the area of sustainable agriculture.

In addition, MSc

1. Design, execute and evaluate research to test hypotheses and to create new ways of viewing and/or addressing issues which can contribute to the field of sustainable agriculture.

### Learning and Teaching Approach

The approach to teaching and learning on this programme will focus on skills development, encouraging open minded discussion and collaborative working, developing critical thinking, and using data and evidence to approach problem solving in agricultural land use.

This approach lies with the competency based approach to education, looking at the skills required to thrive in the modern workplace. This “future proofs” learning, structuring knowledge in a way that enables students to apply it and therefore making it relevant to real life problems – including those that don’t yet exist - and their solutions.

SRUC’s SEEDABLE (**S**ustainability, **E**nterprise, **E**quality, **D**iversity, **A**ctive and **B**lended **Le**arning) Curriculum has been developed to take forward this type of competence-based education and the programme has a number of skills and SEED (**S**ustainability, **E**nterprise, **E**quality and **D**iversity) competencies at its core.

The programme is thus built around the following skills and skills development to enable real world application of knowledge as well as to facilitate personal development:

* Critical thinking and analysis
* Data and handling and analysis
* Evidence appraisal and independent judgement
* Different forms of communication for different audiences
* Ability to use relevant skills, tools and software
* Collaboration
* Student engagement (enjoyment, value, relevance, authenticity)

The SEED competencies identified for the programme are:

* Creativity
* Taking the initiative
* Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk
* Self-awareness and self-efficacy
* Valuing ideas
* Learning through experience
* Motivation and perseverance

Independent learning is key to postgraduate study, and students will be expected to go beyond acquisition of knowledge to develop an approach to learning which will enable them to take forward skills to deal with evolving situations, rather than only the knowledge of current ones, and apply this to future employment scenarios. The learning journey will give a scaffolded approach to students’ development of skills and leadership.

The programme will take a blended approach to learning, being predominantly delivered through distance learning with immersive periods on campus. Teamwork and collaboration will be an important part of the learning experience, aiding in the development of a supportive learning community building support networks not only between students and academic staff but also amongst the student community. In their Year 3 research project, students will be able to take increasing ownership of the direction of their studies and thus develop the skills and expertise most appropriate for their current and future careers. In undertaking this research project, students will not only develop scientific and analytical skills but will further develop transferable employability skills including written and oral presentation as well as project management, interpersonal skills, and professionalism.

The programme’s goal is to assist students in achieving their ambition of gaining essential foundational training to pursue or further a career in sustainable agriculture, as well as equipping them with the employability skills to enable them to also succeed in alternative career paths.

### Assessment Approach

Assessment methods will consider real world application to give authenticity to assessment whilst also supporting academic development. Across different modules students will be assessed on their ability to think critically, construct arguments and identify, handle, analyse and interpret data as well as on the understanding and application of their knowledge.

Thus, assessment will be presented across a range of formats such as oral and written presentation, problem solving, individual and group learning, utilisation of digital technologies such as social media, portfolios for Continuous Professional Development, communication to different audiences etc. This range of assessment aims to future proof student learning, building on evidence-based knowledge to raise awareness and facilitate students in working out how to act on both contemporary and future issues.

# Programme Structure

### Programme Modules/Units

|  | Level | Semester | Title | Credits | Core (C) or elective (E) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year One | | | | | |
|  | 11 | 1 | Principles & Policy for Sustainable Agriculture | 15 | C |
|  | 11 | 1 | Soils in Sustainable Systems | 15 | C |
| Year Two | | | | | |
|  | 11 | 1 | Research Design & Analysis | 15 | C |
|  | 11 | 1 | Global Challenges | 15 | C |
| Years One and Two (choose 4 from 6) | | | | | |
|  | 11 | 2 | Crops in Sustainable Systems | 15 | E |
|  | 11 | 2 | Livestock in Sustainable Systems | 15 | E |
|  | 11 | 2 | Sustainable Entrepreneurship | 15 | E |
|  | 11 | 2 | Principles of Marketing & Communication | 15 | E |
|  | 11 | 2 | Financial Management and Business Planning | 15 | E |
|  | 11 | 2 | Choice of module/s from other SRUC MSc programmes (e.g. Wildlife & Conservation Management) | 15 | E |
| Year Three | | | | | |
|  | 11 | 1&2 | MSc Research Project | 60 | C |

### Programme Navigation

Students can make an initial application for PGCert, PGDip or MSc.

PGCert comprises four taught modules.

PGDip comprises eight taught modules.

MSc comprises eight taught modules plus an independent research project.

The programme also offers flexibility which enables PGCert and PGDip students to apply to progress through these qualification levels, or students enrolled on PGDip or MSc awards to graduate with a lesser award if their circumstances change. Students may also choose to take time out during their studies. The maximum time for completion of PGCert and PGDip is 4 years, and of MSc is 6 years.

There is a progression standard requirement between PGDip and MSc of GPA 12 (C3).

### Work-Based Learning

### There is no specific work placement, but assessments will simulate real world and work based situations.

### Student Support

Students will be supported by a team of dedicated and specialist staff with a range of expertise. SRUC also has academic and pastoral support staff for any students requiring additional support.

There will be an induction weekend at the start of each academic year where students are introduced to SRUC systems as well as getting the opportunity to meet staff and their peers. Throughout the course students will have a tutor who they can contact for advice, support, and guidance, and to discuss their progress. Staff are available to support students throughout their studies.

Students will be supported on their learning journey and equipped with a range of skills that will allow them to develop as learners. Students will have the opportunity to become engaged with the SRUC Student Association (SRUCSA) community as well as their peers.

Graduates become part of SRUC’s Alumni Community where they will join a diverse and talented group of former students. The community provides a place for keeping in touch. There are support and guidance areas and a jobs and careers section to provide valuable advice and information. There are also opportunities for alumni discounts on further study at SRUC. We hope that students will remain connected through the alumni community.

<https://www.sruc.ac.uk/connect/alumni-friends/>

## Internal and External Reference Points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

* SRUC Mission and Values
* SRUC Strategy
* SRUC Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2020-2025
* QAA Subject Benchmark Statements
* Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

# Appendix: Module/Unit Map (Core Modules)

|  |  | Final programme learning outcomes (e.g. of exit award) | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | PGCert/PGDip/MSc | | | | PGDip/MSc | | MSc |  |
|  |  | 1) Identify, evaluate and recommend evidence-based solutions to solve complex problems in sustainable agriculture contexts. | 2) Evaluate and drive the development of personal skills, attributes and professional behaviour | 3) Develop in depth knowledge of the main theories, principles and concepts related to sustainable farming systems and apply to relevant real-world scenarios. | 4) Integrate a range of communication skills relevant to agricultural challenges, adapting communication styles for different people, situations and audiences. | 5) Gather, manage and evaluate quantitative and/or qualitative data, using appropriate tools to draw conclusions from it. | 6) Synthesise and critique information, recognising reliability of sources in establishing current understanding, identifying research questions and proposing solutions in the area of sustainable agriculture. | 7) Design, execute and evaluate research to test hypotheses and to create new ways of viewing and/or addressing issues which can contribute to the field of sustainable agriculture. |  |
| Year 1 | Principles & Policy for Sustainable Agriculture | √ | √ | √ | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Soils in Sustainable Systems | √ | √ | √ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Year 2 | Global Challenges in Agricultural Systems | √ | √ |  | √ |  | √ |  |  |
| Research Design & Analysis |  | √ |  |  | √ | √ |  |  |
| Year 3 | MSc Research Project | √ | √ |  | √ | √ | √ | √ |  |