



HOW DOES YOUR AREA OF EMPHASIS RELATE TO SUSTAINABILITY?

Students at Leeds in every major will find that sustainability skills are differentiators in the workplace, regardless of the job type.

Some key sustainability skills:

- *Ability to make a business case for sustainability and knowledge of market trends*
- *Ability to communicate and influence effectively across multiple stakeholders*
- *An understanding of values-based decision-making approaches*
- *Deep understanding of social and environmental risks and opportunities*

Here are some ways that students should use their area of emphasis to lean into sustainability and become the business leaders of tomorrow.

Accounting

In recent years, most major corporations have begun publishing a sustainability report. Understanding the landscape of reporting, measurement and verification of ESG initiatives is an important skill for accountants, even if a job is not specifically related to ESG. Companies need workers who can navigate the complexity of tax credits for renewables and take advantage of policy changes. In particular, the big four accounting firms—Deloitte, EY, KPMG, and PwC— [are staffing up and training workers](#) to accommodate the rulings from the SEC on emissions reporting. Companies that work in the EU are already beholden to strict reporting rules on emissions. General knowledge of ESG reporting should be encouraged for all accounting majors, though students who are particularly interested should go deeper with carbon accounting and reporting training.

Finance

Finance majors may see a variety of opportunities in the sustainability space. Sustainable finance (also called impact investing or responsible investing) refers to an instrument that considers environmental, social and governance factors in its investment strategy. Some companies, like Nuveen, consider ESG alongside competitive returns in all of their investment decisions. With more than \$300B invested in these funds, their presence is not going away any time soon. Other financial instruments like [green bonds](#) or natural asset companies are changing the industry and students should be aware of these shifts as they enter the job market.

Finance students should also understand climate risk. Shifts in weather patterns have led to dramatic swings in temperature, rising sea levels, more drought, more rainfall, and less predictable seasons. Businesses must adapt to these changes and will need employees to help prepare. Moreover, finance students should know about the opportunities ahead with the energy transition. Climate tech—which refers to any technology that aims to reduce or adapt to climate change—is a rapidly growing industry. Since 2020, climate tech companies have raised \$140B in venture funding. Some of the biggest names in VC today like Bill Gates, Vinod Khosla,

Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility



John Doerr and Sergei Brin have all prioritized climate in their funds. Additionally, project finance for clean energy is a growing sector as is tax equity.

Business Analytics

Business analytics students are extraordinarily well positioned for jobs in sustainability. The transition to a less resource intensive and more sustainable business world requires mass collection of data and analysis. Adaptation to climate change leans heavily on AI generated models to predict future outcomes. Climate tech driven companies demand advanced algorithms to be one step ahead of their competitors. Students who go into consulting will find that many of their clients will be faced with regular questions about sustainability and climate regardless of sector.

Management and Entrepreneurship

We are on the precipice of an enormous shift in the way we do business. Both AI and climate change combined are creating challenges, but also an incredible windfall of opportunity for the business community. Students who are well versed in the economics of the energy transition and the risks of climate change may find climate tech a ripe area for entrepreneurial exploration. Students in leadership management and supply chain management should recognize the need to incorporate sustainability in their operations.

Marketing

Despite inflation and claims of greenwashing by corporate America, a [new study from NYU](#) suggests that sustainability—especially as it relates to health and wellness—is still one of the main motivators for consumers. Indicators suggest that sustainability marketed products [represent 17%](#) of the consumer goods market and the share is growing much more rapidly than conventional products. Gen Z has repeatedly stated they are more concerned with the social, environmental, and ethical ethos of companies than their predecessors. Further, companies like Ball Corporation are finding that [investing in circularity](#) is good for the environment, consumer's health, and the bottom line. What better marketing message is that!

Real Estate

In a competitive real estate market, students will reap the benefits of having a few sustainability skills in their back pocket. Climate monitoring has become more popular in the industry as property valuations begin to acknowledge climate risk. According to the International Energy Agency, buildings consume 40% of the world's energy use and produce 30% of all greenhouse gas emissions. Students with an eye to green building codes, renewable energy development and sustainable land use planning will find they have an advantage in real estate construction and management. Project developers may also find good jobs in the renewable energy industry where companies are looking for employees with skills in originating, negotiating, and finalizing contracts.