Sustainable Development at University of St Andrews

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University of St Andrews Sustainability

SD Undergraduate Programme:
Interdisciplinary curriculum

Research: St Andrews
Sustainability Institute (SASI)

Estates: Sustainable
Development Strategy

Postgraduate teaching:
MSc and PhD

Student groups and
initiatives

Outreach:
teachers and
schools

Senior Management:
A University goal

Rationale for Sustainable Development

Social justice

Meet needs of future generations

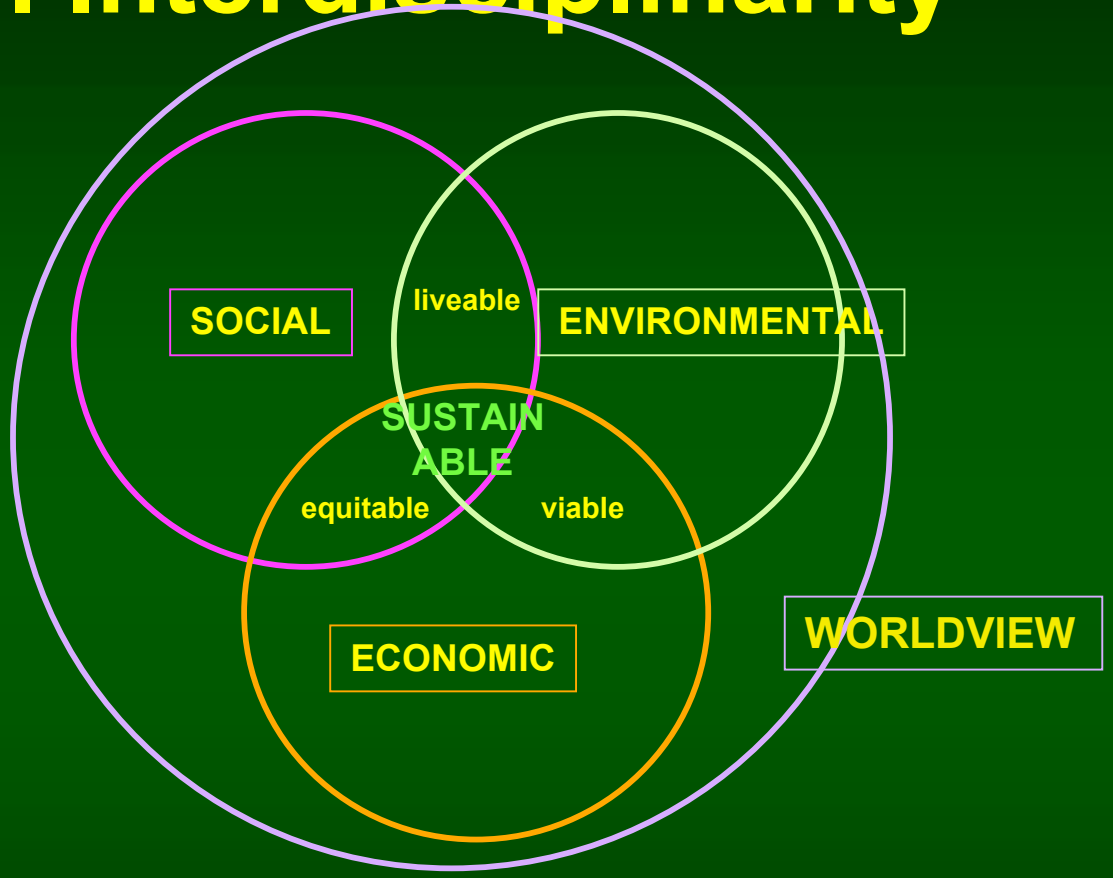
Environmental issues

Principles of degree

1. Interdisciplinarity plus single discipline excellence
2. Local to global focus
3. Contemporary issues framework
4. Critical perspectives
5. Linking theory to practice and developing range of skills

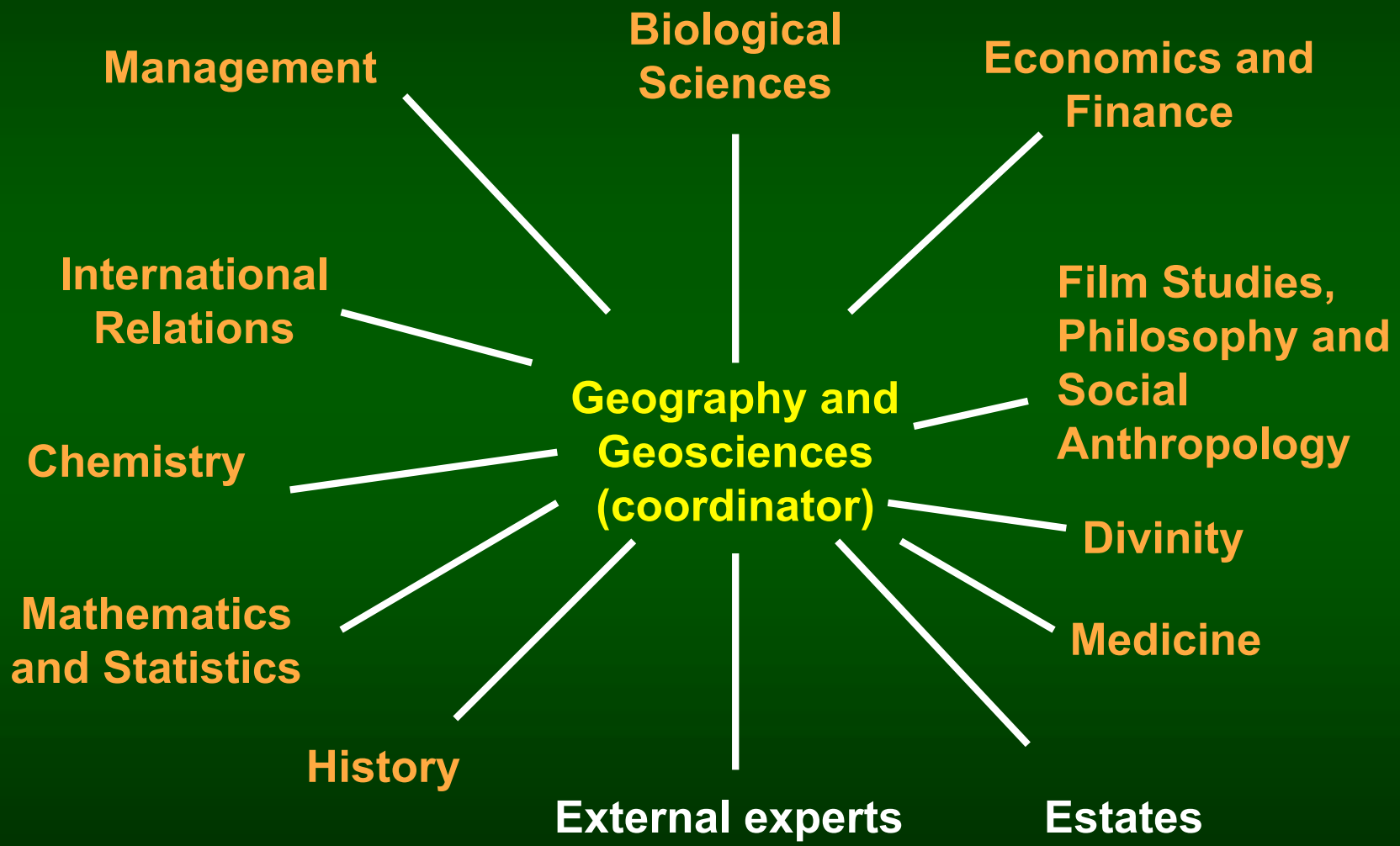
A unique approach to education for sustainable development

1. Interdisciplinarity

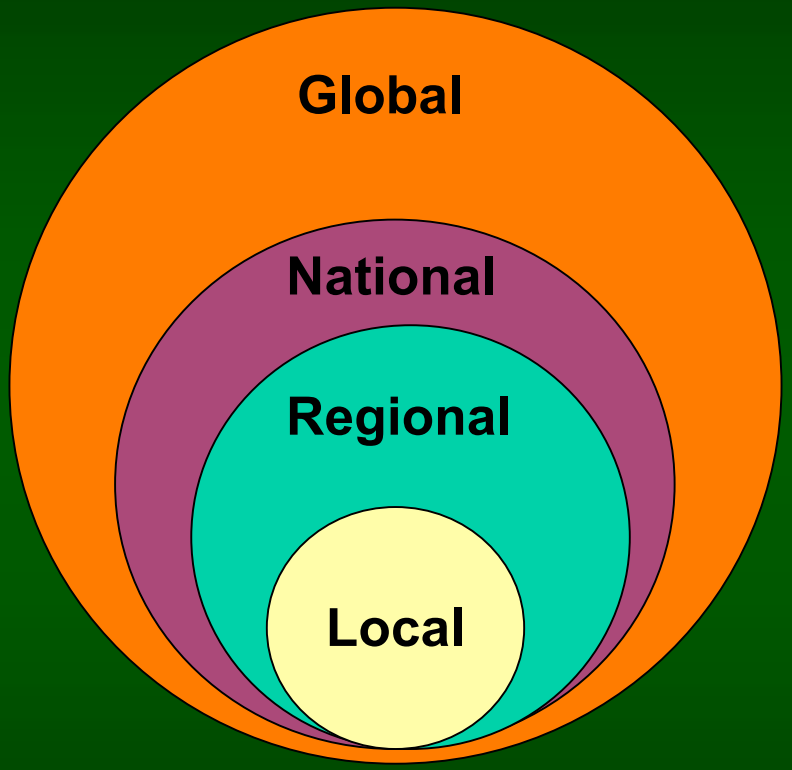


The three legged stool of sustainability

Interdisciplinarity: Schools contributing to teaching



2. Local to global focus



Examples of issues covered:

HIV Aids in Ethiopia

European Water Framework Directive

UK Sustainable Development Indicators

Scotland's Sustainable Development Commission

Fife Council Waste Management

3. Contemporary issues framework

UN's five priority areas:

- Water and sanitation
- Energy
- Health
- Agriculture
- Biodiversity

Cross cutting themes:

- Research and education
- Policy, decision making and governance
- Markets and institutions
- Changing behaviour
- Values, philosophies and ethics
- Gender and equity

4. Critical perspectives

Allowing for different perspectives of SD

Recognising contested nature of concepts

5. Linking theory to practice and developing range of skills

Essays

Educational display

Group work

Careers support

Marketing

Dissertation

Visiting speakers

Independent research

Debate

Exams

Spiral learning

Reports

Presentations

External linkages

Popular articles

Design

Time management

Reflective assignments

Fieldtrips

How is the SD Programme taught?

SD Interdisciplinary core modules + specialism modules

At every level students combine core SD modules with modules from other disciplines (both MA and BSc)

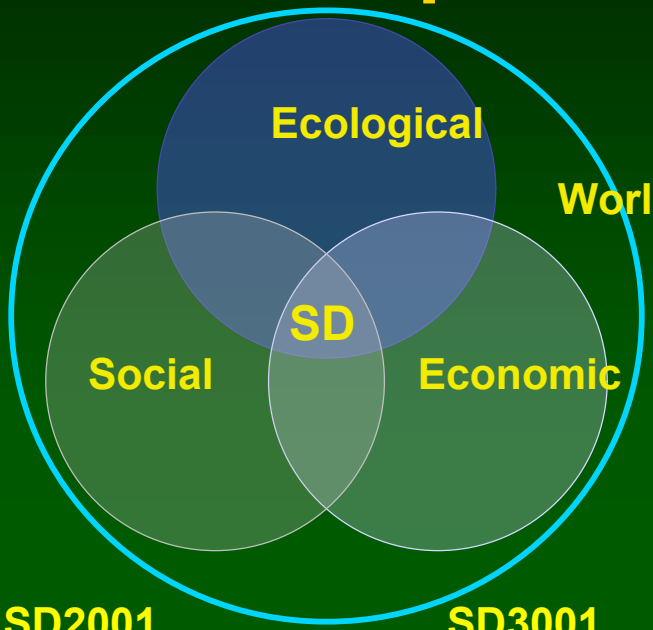
e.g. geography, biology, management, modern history, social anthropology, economics, philosophy, chemistry.

This allows students to tailor individual SD Pathways linked to disciplines or topics that match their skills, interests and career goals

SD Pathways

- *Climate change*
- *International development*
- *Environmental management*
- *Sustainable technologies*
- *Social justice*
- *Knowledge and education for sustainability*
- *Business and corporate social responsibility*
- *Policy for sustainable development*

Sustainable Development Programme



Planned

Year

Semester

SD1001 Sustainable Development: challenges and approaches (20)

SD1002 Sustainability: ensuring our common future (20)

SD2001 Sustainable Development: ecological and environmental aspects (30)

SD2002 Sustainable Development: social and economic aspects (30)

Honours

SD3001 Case studies in Sustainable Development I (20)

SD3002 Review Essay in Sustainable Development (20)

SD3003 Research for sustainable development (20)

SD4001 Case studies in Sustainable Development II (20)

SD4002 Dissertation in Sustainable Development (60 / 45)

A student perspective…..

- Current Third Year student
- Interests in Sustainable development and Management
- *Business and Corporate Social Responsibility* Pathway

Module choices

1st year

- MN1001 Organisations and Society
- GE1001 The Foundations in Geography
- EC1002 Microeconomics
- SD1002 Sustainability: Ensuring our common future
- MN1002 Organisations and Analysis
- EC1001 Macroeconomics

2nd Year

- SD2001 Sustainable Development: Ecological and Environmental Aspects
- MN2001 Management & Society
- EC2004 Quantitative Methods - Mathematics
- SD2002 Sustainable Development: Social and Economic Aspects
- MN2002 Management and Analysis
- EC2003 Quantitative Methods - Statistics

3rd Year

- SD3001 Case Studies in Sustainable Development 1
- MN4227 Corporate Social Responsibility, Accountability and Reporting
- MN3102 Organisation Studies
- SD3002 Review Essay in Sustainable Development
- MN4238 Sustainable Development and Management
- MN3101 Corporate Finance and Control

4th Year (anticipated)

- SD4001 Case Studies in Sustainable Development 2
- MN4203 Dynamic Strategic Management
- SD4002 Dissertation in Sustainable Development
- MN4267 Creative Industries

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Willow weaving

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Scenarios project

SD4001 Findhorn fieldtrip

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SD4002 Sustainable Development: dissertations

Example titles:

Biodiversity Action Plans: the business response to the sustainability agenda

People & Power: A case study of health & health care in an Indian Tea Garden

Barriers and opportunities for domestic microrenewables to contribute to reduction in carbon emissions

Green house gas accounting: can and how should it contribute to a sustainable farming policy in Scotland?

Education for sustainability: the potential for mentoring to enhance learning

Student career prospects:

Graduates will be highly literate and numerate with a capacity to synthesise across a broad range of issues and disciplines

Employability in:

- National, State and Local government
- NGOs
- Conservation
- Impact assessment
- Natural Resource Management
- Business strategy
- Management
- Technology development
- Teaching
- Post-graduate research

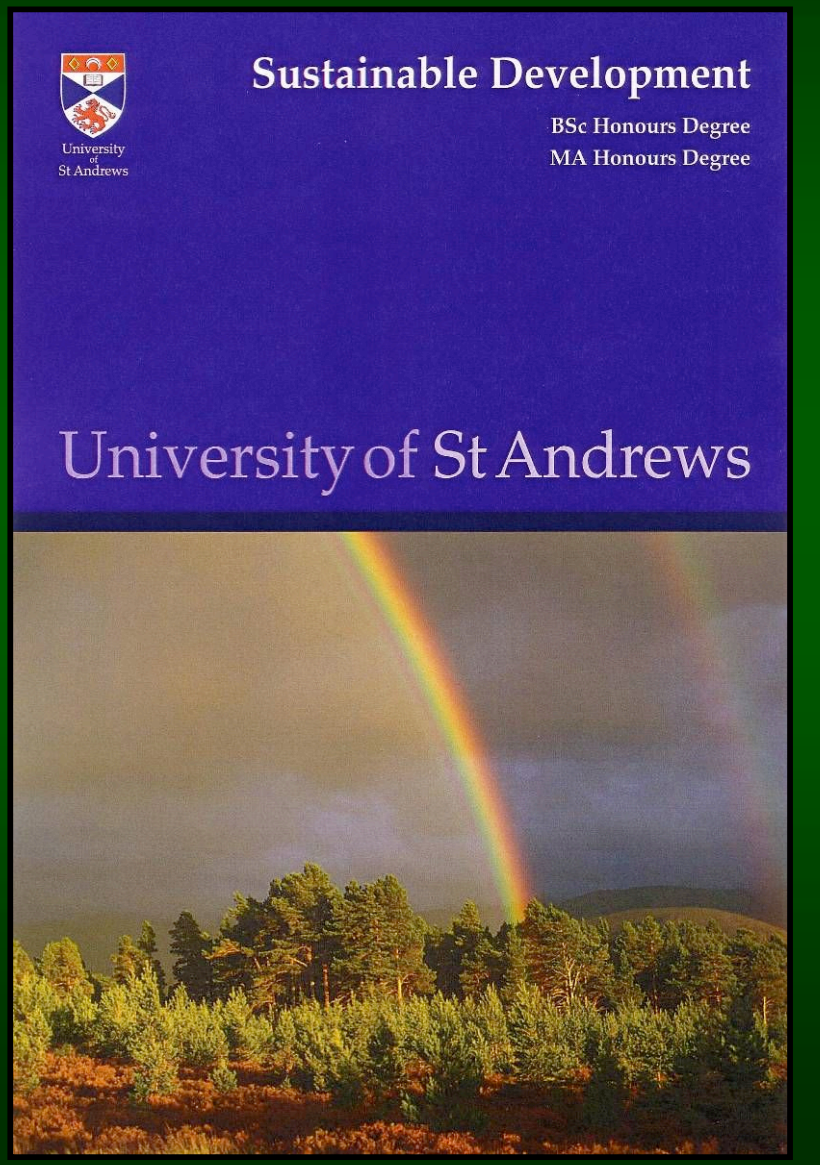
Why is the SD Programme at the University of St Andrews?

'For almost six centuries, we have proudly upheld the tradition of academic excellence, attracting scholars of international repute and students from all over the world. Today, we continue to offer the latest in teaching and research, all within a superbly picturesque mediaeval setting.'

- 'Elite', traditional institution
- What lessons can we learn?

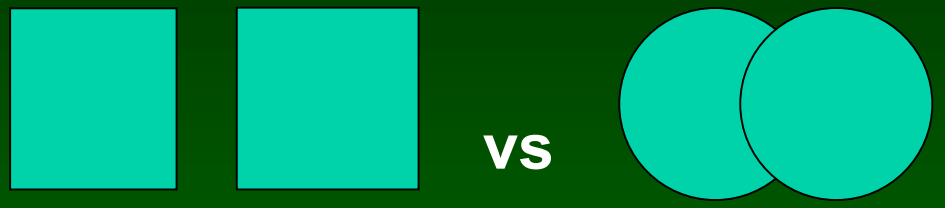
Development of the University of St Andrews SD Undergraduate Programme

- Initiated after Forum for the Future meetings
- driven partly by student demand
- practical development led by the Dean of Science
- enthusiastic staff reactions
- supported by Principal's Office
- full time Degree Coordinator appointed in 2005



Challenges…

•Interdisciplinarity….



•Innovative, transformative teaching can be limited within the neoliberal education system

•Individual changes in management can enhance tension between traditional conservatism and pioneering interdisciplinarity

•Issues raised around resources, governance and academic pathways

Strengths of the SD Programme at St Andrews:

- Integrated & holistic approach spanning wide range of disciplines and expertise.
- Permits interdisciplinary learning alongside development of specialisation.
- Explores contemporary issues across range of scales
- Encourages critical perspective
- Provides training in both analytical and transferable skills
- Unique, pioneering format
- Teaching and learning on campus aiming for enhanced sustainability

Successes so far…

✓Times Higher Education Award for Outstanding Contribution to Sustainable Development 2006

✓First class status for People and Planet Green League Environmental Performance 2007

✓Green Tourism award

✓One of the fastest growing academic areas at the University

✓Leader in campus sustainability initiatives and student led initiatives

Sustainability award energised St Andrews

Tony Tysome

HIGHER
Awards 2007

Charles Warren: 'It meant enormous amount to win'