

IMPERIAL

Beyond the Classroom

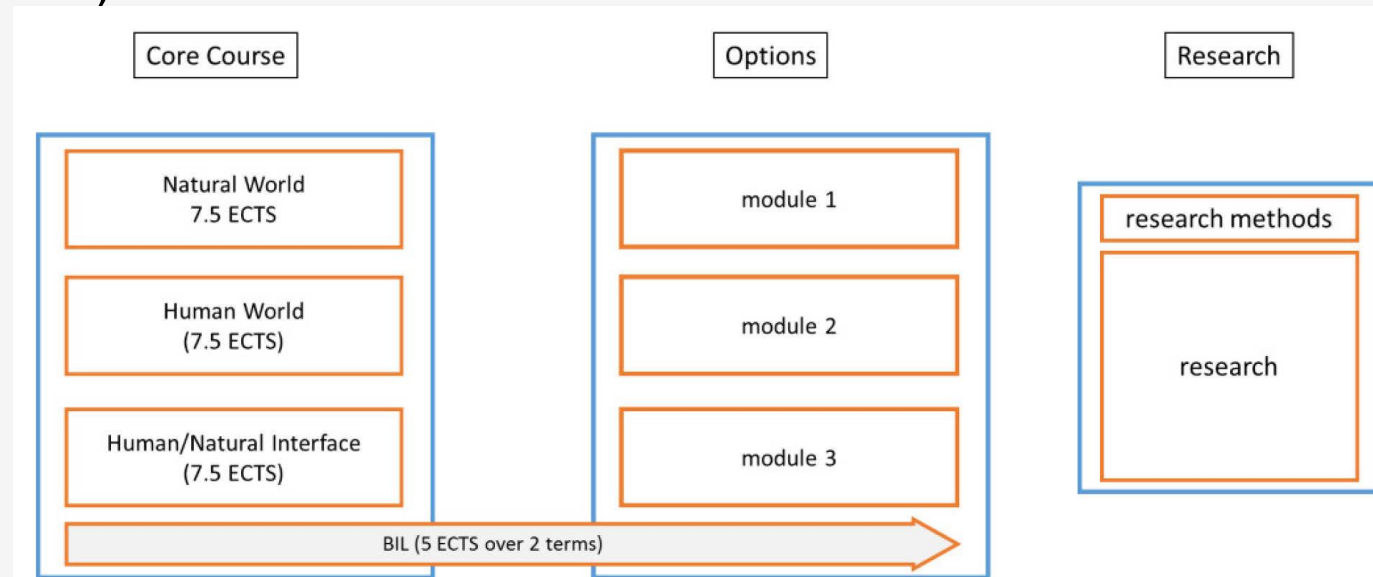
The Role of Field Visits in Teaching Sustainability

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MSc Environmental Technology

Centre for Environmental Policy

- Options:
- Business and the Environment (BE)
- Environmental Assessment and Management (EAM)
- Environmental Economics and Policy (EEP)
- Energy Policy (EP)
- Environmental Resource Management (ERM)
- Global Environmental Change and Policy (GECp)
- Integrated Water Management (IWM)
- Urban Sustainable Environments (USE)



Why?

Teaching Sustainability Needs to Go Beyond the Classroom

- Sustainability involves real-world challenges and multiple stakeholders.
- Traditional classroom learning alone cannot capture the complexity of implementation.
- Sometimes students hearing from professionals in the field is more effective than academics.

"The Eureka moment came after meeting manager Tony Day at Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park at our final field trip. I have heard plenty of people talk about their "one" specialist topic during this semester and how one can tackle the challenges within it, but hearing Mr. Day talk with such extreme passion, and somehow explain how they influence each other, **made me finally connect the dots**. I believe it was his candor, his straightforwardness and 'constructive anger' (as he called it). I have never met someone who has made such a multifaceted and large topic feel almost tangible."

Benefits

Teaching Sustainability Needs to Go Beyond the Classroom

Bridging Theory and Practice

- Exposure to sustainability implementation and real-world constraints.
- Understanding policy challenges and innovative solutions.
- Enhancing critical thinking and practical insights.

Multisensory & Emotional Learning

- Physical immersion creates deeper intellectual and emotional connections.
- Enhances motivation and long-term retention of concepts.
- Real-world exposure makes learning more tangible and impactful.

Student Engagement & Well-being Benefits

- Breaks the monotony of classroom learning.
- Encourages peer interaction and collaboration (Social Constructivism).
- Provides structured physical activity, reducing stress and improving well-being.

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B&E

- 3 day trips
- See first-hand how businesses of different types & stages of development are doing sustainability.
- Opportunity to meet and talk to people in the businesses.

EP

- 4 days-3 nights trip
- Visit some key energy infrastructure, speak to the people who are running it, responsible for regulating it.
- Example from this year:
 - National grid control centre
 - Westmill solar and wind farm
 - Rheidol micro hydro
 - Pembroke Power station
 - Pen y cymoedd wind farm
 - Big pit coal mine.

ERM

- 4 day trips
- To learn about the practicalities of environmental resource management
- Assess the success of the observed practical examples of environmental resource management and their contribution to a wider sustainability context.



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Weekly field trips in the Urban Sustainable Environments option.

Visits to urban regeneration projects, industrial sites, infrastructure developments, and natural environments.

Interaction with practitioners, stakeholders, experts, and communities.



Challenges

Logistical
complexities

Cost
implications

Weather and
unforeseen
disruptions

Uncertainty in
learning

Ensuring
accessibility
and inclusivity

Assessment

Student perspective

How field visits influence student experience and understanding.

Bridging Theory and Practice

"Walking through the streets of London and seeing the Urban Heat Island effect firsthand made climate justice feel real in a way that lectures alone never could. The field trip helped me connect urban theory to lived experiences, reinforcing the importance of designing cities that work for all communities."

Student perspective

How field visits influence student experience and understanding.

Understanding the Social Dimensions of Sustainability

"The visit to Somers Town made me realise that urban development isn't just about buildings; it's about people. Seeing firsthand how gentrification impacts communities, and how grassroots resistance fights back, was an eye-opening experience. Sustainability must include social equity, not just environmental goals."

Student perspective

How field visits influence student experience and understanding.

It wasn't just about learning; it was also about my well-being

"Knowing that every Tuesday I would be out exploring the city, walking for hours, sometimes in green spaces, became something I genuinely looked forward to. The physical activity, fresh air, and change of scenery helped clear my mind, and I noticed that I exceeded the 10,000-step recommendation on most days. These field trips weren't just educational, they were a much-needed boost for my mental and physical health."

Thanks!

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