

Postgraduate Online Learning Open Days 2025

MSc Sustainable Lands and Cities

Programme Directors:

Dr Kirsteen Shields

Professor John Brennan



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Edinburgh Futures Institute

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Sustainable Lands and Cities

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(ESALA)



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Study at Edinburgh Futures Institute

Interdisciplinary

Bringing arts, humanities and social sciences together with sciences, engineering and medicine to address complex global issues.

Participatory and porous

Inviting diverse groupings to bring their ways of working and thinking together. EFI extends this invitation to industry, the public and government.

Critical and research-led

Working on pressing social issues that require new ways of thinking. Mindful of the role of universities in confronting uncomfortable questions.

Future-facing

Embracing the non-traditional, the untried and the unexpected. EFI defines challenges and co-creates responses to build better futures.



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Sustainable Futures

- Data, Inequality and Society
- Planetary Health
- Sustainable Lands and Cities
- Future Infrastructure, Sustainability and Climate Change



Creative Futures

- Service Management and Design
- Creative Industries
- Narrative Futures: Art, Data, Society
- Cultural Heritage Futures



Just Futures

- Data and AI Ethics
- Education Futures
- Future Governance



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What's different about Education at EFI?

- interdisciplinary programmes taught by leading academics from different Schools and disciplines
- equipping you with the critical, data and creative skills needed to navigate a rapidly-changing world
- you can study flexibly, please see degree finder for programme specific information and options
- we will help you apply leading-edge knowledge to live projects you care about
- we are proud of our ecosystem and the opportunities to connect you to our partners in the community, industry and government



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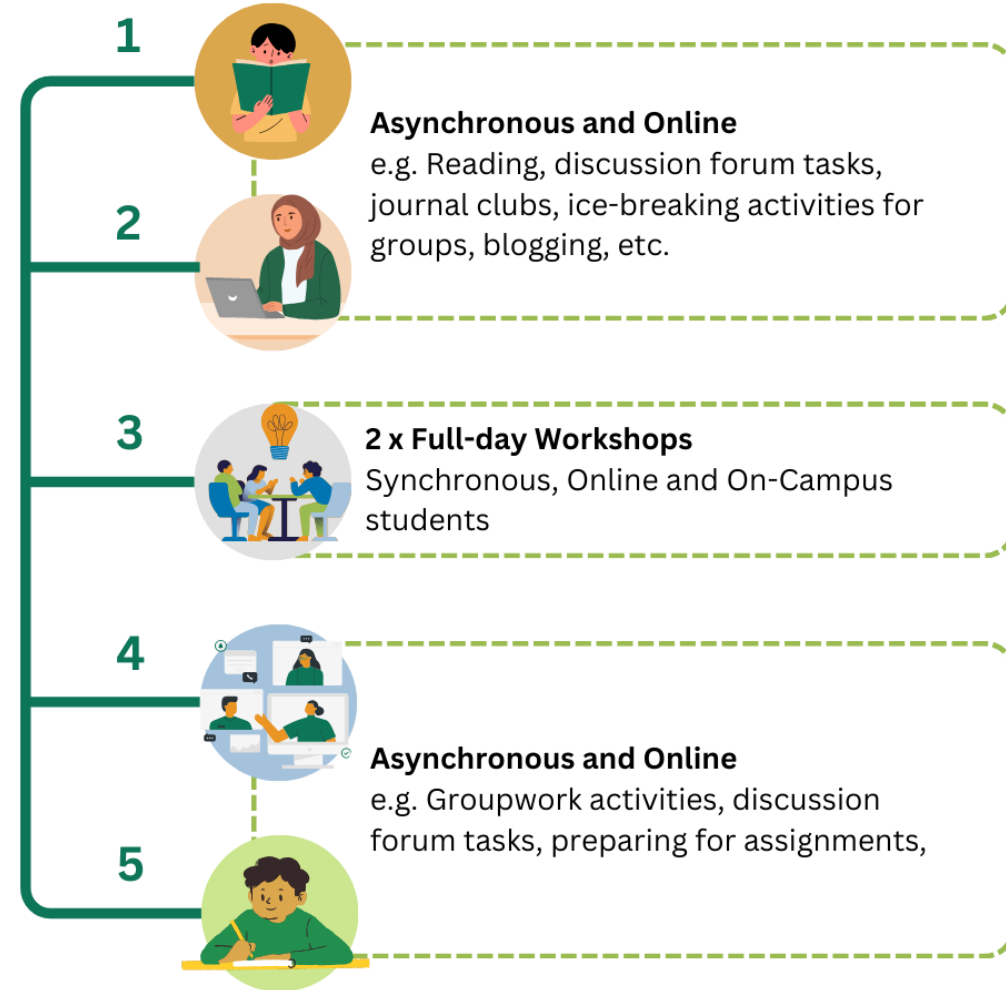
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Fusion teaching

- breaking down the online/on-campus distinction
- community-focused: bringing students from across the world together as a single cohort
- accessible: most courses are taught in five week blocks, with online activities and a two day long intensive sessions (09:00-17:00 Edinburgh local time)
- connected: employers work with us on the design and teaching of our programmes and help support projects

Intensive Course Timeline

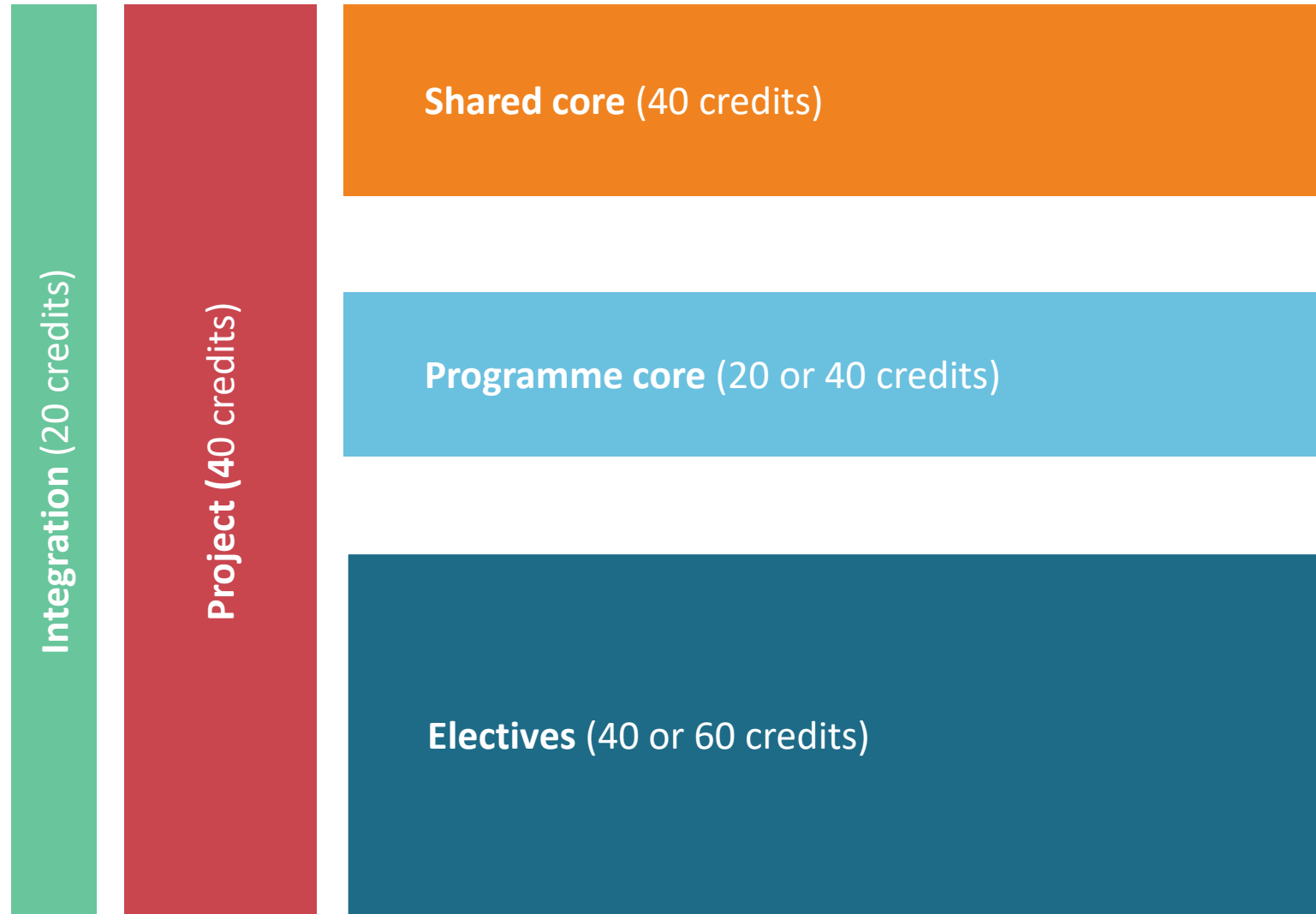
Weeks



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Our MSc programme structure



Our core courses

Futures Methods

Practical skills to apply cutting-edge futures and foresight methods and tools across diverse fields

Insights Through Data

Data science foundations, analytic and programming skills

or

Text Remix

Basic programming and creative skills

Representing Data

Programming and maker skills for data visualization and physicalisation

or

Building Near Futures

Futures methods and responses shared in a public-facing format

Ethical Data Futures

The ethical dimensions of contemporary data practices



Skill focused

Working in cross-disciplinary teams with students from other Futures Institute programmes, you will learn critical data skills, ethical awareness, creative thinking, and methods to address complex issues:

- collect, manage and analyse computational datasets
- use emerging methodologies for mapping and designing possible futures
- learn the fundamentals of data ethics
- learn how to use creative skills in the analysis and representation of data-informed and qualitative inquiry



The student experience

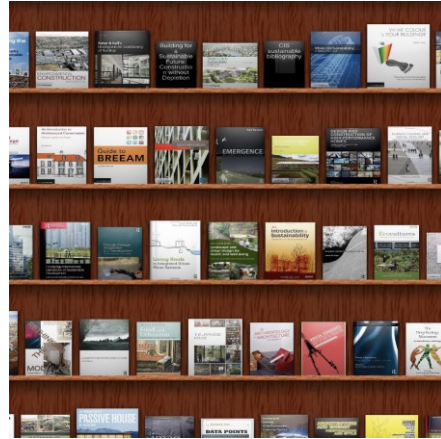
- global and diverse cohort, on campus and online
- a very well supported experience with a dedicated student experience and support team
- events and networks to connect with each other



MSc Sustainable Lands and Cities: Addressing Sustainable Challenges

information overload

how do we find what's relevant to plot a path to resilient sustainable strategies?



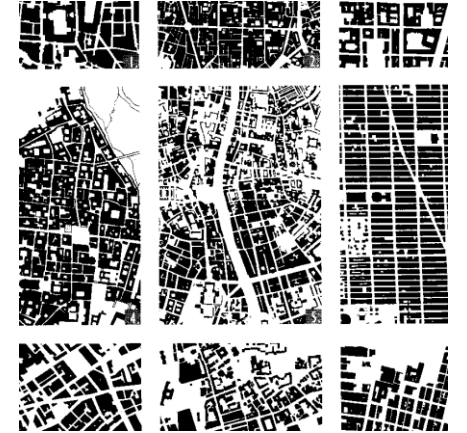
context is all

every urban and rural context is different; how to move from generic indicators to focused solutions?



the ever evolving city

how can we and our infrastructures keep up with cities and countrysides in cycles of rapid change



fundamentals of land

understanding how land is owned and controlled underpins any kind of sustainable development



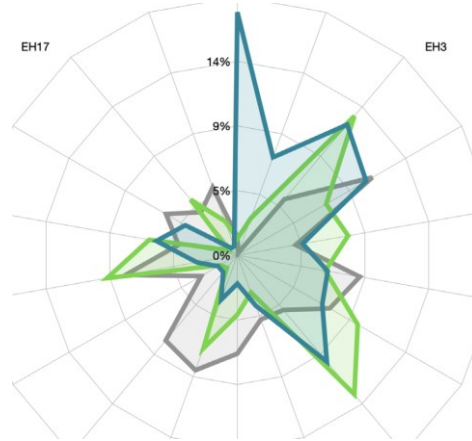
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MSc Sustainable Lands and Cities: Acquiring Expertise

data analysis

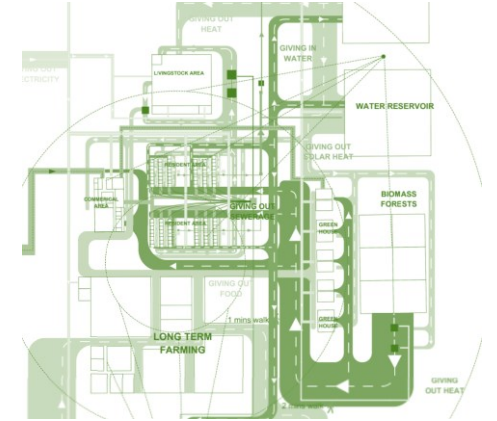
master diverse datasets to understand complex urban environments.



systems thinking

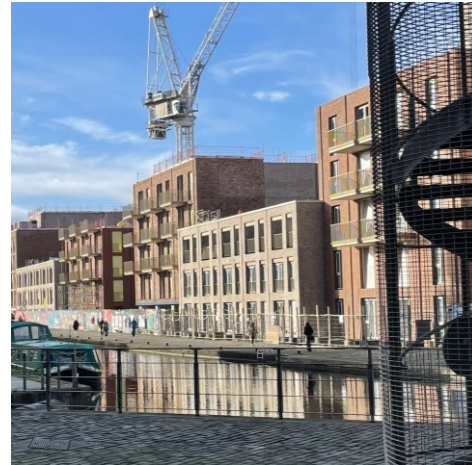
deploy systems analysis to engage with multi-stranded urban challenges

image: Wenze Gu, Liang Wang, Xiaoxiao Fan, Kübra Tanrikulu



interrogating place

understand how cultural, physical and data infrastructures affect our cities and rural places.



understanding community

learn how communities construct themselves and can become vehicles for sustainable development.



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MSc Sustainable Lands and Cities: Create Sustainable Strategies

data to strategy

use data to underpin sustainable strategies in the city
image Dennis Macaria



unlocking wicked problems

create sustainable strategies for change that embrace complexity and paradox



intervening in place

deploy cutting edge design strategies for adaptation, rewilding and making resilient communities

image Zoe Watters Joshua O Mahoney Richard Beer Ho Kwan Leung



enabling community

use design techniques to empower communities to define and imagine their land and settlements.



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MSc Sustainable Lands and Cities: Our Curriculum

Envisioning Sustainability

fundamentals of sustainability for our lands and cities

C

Evaluating Sustainability

data fundamentals to understand our lands and cities

C

Regenerating Place

co-design for neighbourhoods, blue and green ecologies

E

Land Community Power

ownership & community for sustainable development

E

Data Mobility and Infrastructure

work with data to understand mobility in the city

E

A Systemic Approach to Sustainability

tools to intervene in complex urban systems

E

Eco Cities

understanding what eco city can really mean

E

EFI Electives

choose electives across EFI to support your learning portfolio

E

Our Staff Disciplines

- Urbanism
- Law
- Business Studies
- Environmental Science
- Architecture+Design
- Data Science
- Community Engagement

bring your learning together in your Sustainable Lands and Cities Futures Project



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MSc Sustainable Lands and Cities: Future Careers

You will be able to work collaboratively to create and execute sustainable strategies. You can acquire cross-disciplinary skills and understanding to support decision making in complex environments. You will have a range of career opportunities available, both for existing professionals and newer entrants to the job market:

Public and Voluntary Sector Organisations

Public, Third Sector and Non-Profits plan for the future in response to sustainable development goals. You will be able formulate strategy and tools to achieve targets for resilience and sustainability.

Environmental, Spatial & Community Consultancy

Work with multidisciplinary organisations using the skillsets you assemble in this programme. Often urban and rural projects are complex in nature and the ability to work with data sets is valued by employers

Develop within your own field

Graduates already in their professional roles will be able to work within their existing fields but with a specialism in sustainable development. Examples include planning, engineering, design, project management, the environmental sciences, public administration, law and advocacy.



Questions?

- for further queries contact: **efi.education@ed.ac.uk**
- visit the EFI website: **<https://efi.ed.ac.uk/postgraduate-study>**
- search for 'Edinburgh Futures Institute' on our degree finder:
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/degrees>



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Join us to **challenge, create**, and make **change** happen.



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