

CCP 401 Sustainability Reporting

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Corporate social responsibility programs are considered an organizational best practice. A focus on sustainability helps organizations manage their social and environmental impacts, improving their bottom line. Just as importantly, the disclosure of such activities has become a topic of importance for organizational stakeholders such as employees, customers, investors and the government. Widely documented and researched benefits to sustainability reporting and disclosure include:

- An improved organizational reputation
- A more loyal and engaged workforce
- Improved access to capital
- Increased organizational efficiency and resource reduction

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of the course is to provide participants with the knowledge to start or enhance their organization's sustainability reporting projects through providing a current and relevant overview of the sustainability reporting universe. Students will gain a strong understanding sustainability reporting frameworks, best practices, pitfalls to avoid, and ways to ensure their sustainability reporting is meaningful and value-added to their organization. This will be done through discussion, review of up-to-date research, and analysis of current existing sustainability reports. Additionally, participants will gain an enhanced ability to assess and evaluate other organization's sustainability reports.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Participants will leave with:

- An up-to-date understanding of the state of sustainability reporting internationally, with a focus on Canadian content
- In-depth insight into the most widely accepted sustainability reporting frameworks, with a focus on the Global Reporting Initiative
- Knowledge regarding sustainability best practices, with a focus on areas where sustainability reporting can provide true added value to an organization
- An awareness of common sustainability reporting pitfalls which typically require significant effort with little organizational benefit
- Tips, tools, and best practices to begin or enhance their own organization's sustainability reporting efforts
- The ability to better assess and evaluate information in other organization's sustainability reports
- A larger network of like-minded professionals

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Course Texts TBA

Keeping up with the readings is essential. In order to participate effectively in class interactions, please have the assigned readings completed early in the week in which they are assigned.

ASSIGNMENTS, GRADES AND ASSESSMENT

Grades are based on your writing and critical thinking ability, participation in both the discussion forums and live chats, and level of group contribution to various projects.

Assignment	Due Date	Weight
Short Essay 1	Week 2	10%
Take-Home Exam	Week 4	10%
Short Essay 2	Week 7	10%
Participation in Discussion Forum	Ongoing	30%
Participation in Synchronous Discussions	Ongoing	5%
Preliminary to the Long Essay	Week 9	5%
Final Long Essay	Week 10	30%

There are two short essays (due in weeks 2 and 7), one take-home exam (in week 4), preliminary to the long, and one long essay due in the final week.

The short essays will be based on the required and additional readings from the course, and will allow the student to synthesize materials in a critical and succinct manner. Essays will average 1000 words each. The purpose of these essays is for you to improve your writing and critical thinking skills, and to explore the content of the course in a formal manner. The longer essay will be a research paper in which you will take a case study from the readings or from your personal or professional experience and apply the concepts learned in the course to your chosen case. You will receive clear instructions on both the short and long essays once the course has started. The short 24 hour take-home exam will evaluate your growing knowledge and will be a series of questions to be answered in paragraph form based on course content in combination with peer-reviewed articles and/or government documents.

Overall assessment

This course requires that you maintain 70% or greater in the course work for continuation in the course. There is an expectation for a high level of quality in the work produced by the student. For evaluation purposes, work will be graded under the following criteria:

Distance Education Certificate Program Grade Scale

Letter Grade Scale	Numerical Scale of Marks
A +	90-100%

A	85-89%
A -	80-84%
B+	77-79%
B	73-76%
B-	70-72%
FZ	0-69%

STUDENT OBLIGATIONS

a) Students are expected to participate "in class" every week. Participation is 30% of your overall mark and will be based on regular contributions to all discussions, so do participate. Rubrics on the measure of quantity and quality of your participation in the discussion forum will be used for evaluation.

Promptness and Initiative	Does not respond to most postings; rarely participates freely	Responds to most postings several days after initial discussion; limited initiative	Responds to most postings within a 24 hour period; requires occasional prompting to post	Consistently responds to postings in less than 24 hours; demonstrates good self-initiative
Delivery of Post	Utilizes poor spelling and grammar in most posts; posts appear "hasty"	Errors in spelling and grammar evidenced in several posts	Few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts	Consistently uses grammatically correct posts with rare misspellings
Relevance of Post	Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short or irrelevant remarks	Occasionally posts off topic; most posts are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic	Frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content; prompts further discussion of topic	Consistently posts topics related to discussion topic; cites additional references related to topic
Expression Within the Post	Does not express opinions or ideas clearly; no connection to topic	Unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal expression of opinions or ideas	Opinions and ideas are stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic	Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic
Contribution to the Learning Community	Does not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops;	Occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group	Frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by	Aware of needs of community; frequently attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic

seems indifferent	group; interacts freely
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b) Students are also expected to meet deadlines for written assignments. The assignments will have specific due dates. If you are unable to meet one of the deadlines (for a legitimate reason such as illness), please email the course instructor before the deadline.

Forum Etiquette

In discussion forums, remember to think, discuss, and debate from a multitude of perspectives. Both the instructor and the student will use language that is scholarly and professional. Express yourself clearly, accurately, and in an intellectual rather than in a personal fashion.

Discussion forums are designed for you to ask questions and gain further knowledge. Remember to reason intelligently with the instructor and other students. Please feel free to give your view or interpretation based on your own experiences.

Develop awareness of your own biases and make conscious efforts to ameliorate them. Keep in mind that the course materials may use jargon and technical terms that are not familiar to you. Seek to understand the subtleties of these new terms to gain a deeper understanding of the material being presented. Please ask about concepts or terms that you do not understand.

Remember, if you have a question, it is likely someone else has the same question. Also, be conscious of the language you use when you speak about race, ethnicity, and gender. And be careful to avoid any bigoted or exclusive language.

Students who express themselves inappropriately or attack others personally in the discussion forums will lose their points for participation, and possibly their privilege to continue. Most students are considerate and respectful of others, but every now and then, someone is abusive and it ruins the experience for everyone.

SYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSIONS (Chats)

The synchronous live chats will involve scheduled times for the class to meet on-line together to review questions related to the readings, and to provide a more informal basis to discuss concerns and questions over material as it relates to current world situations. You may also find the live chat area useful when working with other students on assignments - please feel free to do so.