

ESSAM 2026

"Building Global Leaders in Sustainable Business and Impact-Driven Entrepreneurship: Regional, Industry and Business Level"

ESSAM 2026 will focus on advancing sustainable business practices and impact-driven entrepreneurship while building a global community of future business leaders. This year's programme will highlight Scotland's role as a hub for sustainable and impactful enterprise, interweaving cultural experiences with immersive learning led by leading academics and industry experts.

About ESSAM 2026

The European Summer School for Advanced Management (ESSAM) is an intensive, two-week summer programme for MBA students, combining high-level coursework, workshops, guest lectures, consultancy projects, and immersive cultural experiences. ESSAM enables MBA students to fast-track part of their studies in a dynamic international setting. Established over 30 years ago, ESSAM is delivered by an international consortium of business schools, offering participants diverse perspectives and expertise.

Hosted by the triple-accredited Adam Smith Business School at the University of Glasgow, ESSAM 2026 offers:

- A blend of core modules and professional skills focused on the latest in sustainable enterprise and impact-driven innovation
- Real-world team consultancy projects with local organisations and social enterprises

- A programme designed to encourage global networking among MBA students, professors, and industry professionals
- Access to Scotland's rich cultural heritage through curated excursions, events, and local partnerships

Programme Highlights

- **Core Theme: Sustainable Development and Impact Entrepreneurship**
Explore sustainable business models, third-sector growth, and leadership strategies for impact entrepreneurship.
- **Consultancy Project: Work in teams to provide consulting services to a Scottish social enterprise or impact-driven business, culminating in a final report and presentation to a panel of business and academic leaders.**
- **Cultural and Networking Events:**
 - Ceilidh (Scottish traditional music and dance)
 - Visits to Scottish landmarks and heritage sites
 - Networking dinners and social events with industry leaders

Core Module Part 1: Leading in the World

Over three days “Leading in the World” will be an exploration together into:

- Sustainability - what does it mean for us?
- Leading in the World – what sort of leadership is needed?
- Strategic Thinking – a practical guide
- Leading Change – a meta-theory for change
- Culture and Decision-Making – in a complex world

Course Learning Goals

The learning goal is to strengthen participants' capacities to lead in the world, by providing participants with useful models and some practical experience of applying them to their current or anticipated leadership roles.

Provisional Session Outline

| Date/ Lecturer | Session | Illustrative Content |
|---|----------------------|--|
| <i>Day Date</i> <i>Month Teaching</i> <i>staff member</i> | <i>Session Title</i> | <i>25-word maximum description of session.</i> |
| Tue 23 June Mark Clark | Sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Sustainable Development Goals· 9 Planetary Boundaries· Perma-crisis, Poly-crisis, Meta-crisis· Three Horizons· Inner Development Goals· Purpose, Values, and Culture· 9 Whys |
| Tue 23 June Mark Clark | Leading in the World | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· 4 Questions of Conscience· The choice to Lead· Leadership of Self· The Knowing-Doing Gap· Situational Leadership· The importance of Hope |
| Wed 24 June Mark Clark | Strategic Thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Stakeholder Analysis· Contextual Analysis· Key uncertainties |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Strategic Scenarios · Organisational Capacity · Flywheel |
| Wed 24 June Mark Clark | Leading Change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Thinking about Change. Theories and Metaphors for Change. · John Kotter's 8 Steps · 5 Colours Framework - A meta-theory for Change · 5 Colours self-assessment · Barriers to change: SCARF threats · Enablers of Change: COM-B = Capability + Opportunity + Motivation = behaviour |
| Thu 25 June Mark Clark | Culture and Decision Making – Part 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Culture's impact on Strategy and Execution · Cultural communication styles · Undiscussables · Persuasion and Influencing · Decision Quality |
| Thu 25 June Mark Clark | Culture and Decision Making – Part 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Decision Making simulation · Debrief of the simulation · Decision Logs · A learning culture: Reflective Practice |

Core Module Part 2: Leadership and Sustainability

Tuesday/Thursday: Entrepreneurship in rural areas entails a distinct set of opportunities and challenges including issues around connectivity, demography and environmental concerns, and the importance of place-based assets and has strong potential to support a variety of social, economic and environmental goals. This short course will

cover some of the techniques and methods required to develop sustainable business models with the potential to deliver economic and social impacts. These include the application of concepts and research findings relevant to rural enterprise, researching and identifying opportunities and challenges.

Wednesday: This course will explore what is meant by 'leadership' in the context of regional development, who place leaders are and how they exercise leadership, in the context of multi-level governance where 'no-one is in charge'. Drawing on a variety of examples from different places, it examines place-based approaches to development that build on local strengths, assets and priorities. It will also look at different ways of understanding development, as distinct from economic growth, and perspectives on what constitutes sustainability.

Core Module Part 2: Course Learning Objectives

Tuesday/Thursday:

Describe different concepts and models relevant to entrepreneurship.

Identify and research the specific opportunities and challenges associated with enterprise in a rural setting.

Wednesday:

- Greater awareness of the contested and variable nature of 'development'
- Understanding of the place-based approaches to development
- Understanding of the nature and challenges of place leadership

Provisional Session Outline

Tuesday 30 June - Rural Entrepreneurship - delivered by Prof. Douglas Shand

Entrepreneurs often cite ambition, flexibility, freedom, and a desire for change as motivating factors for starting their own business. Rural entrepreneurs share these same motivations, but face unique challenges due to a lack of experience, support, and necessary skills. This course is specifically designed to examine these challenges and

provide individuals and teams based in rural areas with the skills and knowledge needed to launch and sustain successful businesses. The course also provides foundational knowledge for those in an economic development role who may need to support rural entrepreneurs. It will focus on researching and identifying robust, scalable, and impactful business models that are suited to operating in a rural context, developing a business model canvas, the challenges of the rural context and people and place.

Wednesday 2nd July - Place Leadership and Sustainable Development - delivered by Dr. David Clelland

This session will bring some new perspectives and wider contexts for the students to consider. This course will explore what is meant by 'leadership' in the context of regional development, who place leaders are and how they exercise leadership, in the context of multi-level governance where 'no-one is in charge'. Drawing on a variety of examples from different places, it examines place-based approaches to development that build on local strengths, assets and priorities. It will also look at different ways of understanding development, as distinct from economic growth, and perspectives on what constitutes sustainability.

Thursday 3rd July - Leadership For Sustainability and Innovation - delivered by Prof. Douglas Shand

This course will build on the adaptive and situational leadership topics delivered in week 1 with a primary focus on ESG and developing leadership skills to move organisations from the transactional nature of CSR to an integrated and strategic ESG philosophy. This course explores the principles and practices of sustainable leadership within today's complex business environment. Students will examine how leaders can drive long-term organisational success by balancing the three main aspects of ESG, economic performance, social responsibility and environmental stewardship and governance. Participants will develop skills to enable decision making, foster

innovation and ensure stakeholder engagement whilst aligning with sustainable development goals.

Consultancy Project (Friday 26 June to Friday 4 July)

The group project is based on real organisations that have specific business problems. At the beginning of the project, the group members will visit their allocated company to further specify and outline the purpose of the consultancy project brief. Students are required to:

- Produce a client report in the form of an annotated PowerPoint;
- Give an oral presentation. The client report will subsequently be graded.