



Syllabus 2026

The ‘Sustainability for All’ course is an innovative and first of its kind to raise awareness, knowledge and skills to all NOVA University students (Bachelors, Masters, and PhD) who want to learn about sustainability, as a scientific and technical fundamental topic, for a more responsible professional future. The second edition of *Sustainability for All* in Spring 2026 offers students the opportunity to engage in the course, both as an elective curricular unit or as an extra-curricular course, providing a supplement to the diploma¹.

Course structure

SUSTAINABILITY for ALL is a blended course comprising 12 missions, designed to provide a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to sustainability covering diverse domains from all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. A digital community, supported by mentors, will guide students through the learning process and mission completion. The course is blended learning, following a predefined calendar published online. It is worth 3 ECTS credits in some schools and programs, corresponding to a total workload of 84 hours per student. Students will take the learning journey at their own pace along the semester, accomplishing the selected missions, and taking three in-person scheduled sessions.

In-person half-day sessions:

- 1. Welcome session: Systems Thinking for Sustainability Challenges.** At the very beginning of the course. Mandatory kickoff session featuring inspirational talks on Theory of Change and Systems Thinking. Students will work hands-on to train these skills, and network with colleagues from all NOVA schools.
- 2. Long-term thinking and interdisciplinary mindset.** At middle of the course. Mandatory session, focusing on exploring sustainability challenges under a multistakeholder perspective. Students will first learn the stakeholder perspective and then act in multistakeholder teams. This session also offers a unique opportunity to network with students from all NOVA schools. Mandatory presence is required.
- 3. Learning together.** At course closing. Mandatory session, dedicated to: (Part I) the exam over a digital platform and (Part II) students’ presentations of their assignments. Students may learn from missions different from those he/she took to complete. Learn on the wide scope of sustainability.

¹ For detailed information about the options each school adopted please contact the course coordinator in each school (page 4 of this document).

12 Missions: in most cases, each mission addresses more than one interrelated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The missions are organized in four sets.

SET 1: The Foundations of Life on Earth:

- A Healthy Planet (SDG 14, SDG 15)
- Land Use and Food Production (SDG 2, SDG 6, SDG 13)
- Climate and Energy: Act Now! (SDG 7, SDG 13)

Set 2: Human Health and Well-Being

- One Health and Well-Being (SDG 3, SDG 13, SDG 15)
- Health and Sustainable Food (SDG 2, SDG 3)
- Pure Air, Clean Water, Healthy Future (SDG 3, SDG 6, SDG 7)

SET 3: Human Structures and Challenges for Sustainability

- Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)
- Sustainable Economic Development (SDG 1, SDG 8, SDG 10)
- Industry and Infrastructures (SDG 9, SDG 13)

SET 4: Social Dimensions of Sustainability

- Inclusion, Gender, and Migration (SDG 4, SDG 5)
- War and Peace in the 21st Century: Where, Why, and How? (SDG 16)
- How Sustainable Is Our Built Environment? (SDG 10, SDG 11)

Each set include three missions. At the start of the course, the students can access and read about the 12 missions and will choose four to complete, one mission per set. Two of these missions must be accomplished at the middle of the course and the other two at the end.

What is a mission? A Mission is a challenge designed to expand your knowledge and skills in sustainability! The course consists of 12 missions, each addressing one or more interrelated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These missions were carefully designed and crafted by Professors from various NOVA schools to provide a rich, interdisciplinary perspective.

How does a mission work? Each Mission was designed to be a dynamic and rewarding experience, blending discovery, reflection, and application into a cohesive learning journey. Each mission is designed for a maximum of 18 h workload (less than 3 full days). As any mission, the students will take the necessary steps to accomplish a goal, engaging with diverse topics, gaining new insights, and applying the learning to real-world sustainability challenges. Each mission starts by jumping into a pool of new concepts and knowledge student needs to understand before deep diving into detailed topics and completing the assignment that will get you to a podium. Let's see the structure of a mission in detail.

1. JUMP

JUMP is the first step. Student is introduced to the topic through a brief but impactful context. This step sets the stage for understanding the topic's relevance, magnitude, and broader impact. Students are guided through a curated selection of online resources, including articles and videos, to build a foundational understanding. Along the way, students are encouraged to reflect on the key challenges in the field, with curiosity and critical thinking.

2. DIVE

DIVE is the second step. Students are invited to explore deeper the subject, by exploring a specific subtopic, reflecting and uncovering new perspectives. This step encourages students to focus on particular aspects of the subject, as a strategic approach to learning. A reflective exercise challenges students to articulate their thoughts by answering a series of open-ended questions, fostering both self-awareness and a deeper grasp of the material. To support students' journey, additional resources are offered to enrich their understanding, and own research is encouraged.

3. PODIUM

PODIUM is the third and last step. Students apply everything they've learned. This is the moment to put knowledge into action. Through a hands-on Assignment and a self-assessment quiz, students consolidate their learning and demonstrate their knowledge of the concepts. In this phase, students are also invited to peer-review colleagues' assignment.

Fostering a community

The UC Sustainability for All is alive in a friendly digital platform. A Community Chat will provide a collaborative space for students to engage in meaningful discussions, exchange ideas, and ask questions. Moderated by mentors, this forum fosters both peer learning and direct interaction with subject-matter specialists, if needed.

Additionally, students will have the opportunity to connect with the mentors during two live scheduled sessions. These sessions offer a unique chance to deepen students' understanding, gain insights and engage in dynamic conversations about the mission topics, or any other doubts about anything of the course.

Students should take this community as an opportunity to create and enlarge their networks with colleagues from other scientific and technical areas, as well as personal friendship relations.

Peer Review: A Pillar of Collaborative Learning

Peer review is a structural element of students' Learning Experience, fostering a deeper understanding through collaboration and constructive feedback. By reviewing and reflecting on the work of their peers, students sharpen their critical thinking skills and gain fresh perspectives. Peer Review strengthens individual mastery of the subject and cultivates a sense of shared responsibility and active participation in the learning community. Peer-review will follow a matrix provided, to facilitate students' work and smooth their task.

Assessment

For bachelor's degree students

The student will get APPROVED IN THE COURSE, if:

- A. Be present in the three in-person sessions.
- B. Get the average grade of the selected four missions of least 9,5/20, taking the following criteria:
 - i. In-person multiple-choice exam, over a digital platform: 70% weight in the final grade
 - ii. Submission of four missions' assignments: 15% in final grade.
 - iii. Peer-review carried out of other students' assignments²: 15% in final grade

For master's degree students

The student will get APPROVED IN THE COURSE, if

- A. Be present in the three in-person sessions.
- B. Get the average grade of the selected four missions of least 9,5/20, taking the following criteria:
 - i. In-person multiple-choice exam plus one open question for development, over a digital platform: 50% weight in the final grade
 - ii. Average grade of the four missions' assignments, after the oral presentation included in the final in-person session: 30% in final grade.

² Each student is assessed by reviewing other students' work on the digital platform, by completing an assessment matrix prepared by the teaching team. The student gets 5 points per assignment reviewed up to a maximum of four assignments

iii. Peer-review carried out of other students' assignments¹: 20% in final grade

For PhD students

The student will get APPROVED IN THE COURSE, if:

A. Be present in the three in-person sessions.

B. Get the average grade of the selected four missions of least 9,5/20, taking the following criteria:

i. Active participation in the evaluation panel of the master students' assignments (evaluation criteria from each mission's professors), included in the last in-person mission: 50% of the final grade.

iii. Submission of a report (max 3 pages) describing the impact of the selected mission topics on his/her research plan and objectives within the scope of the PhD (assessed by the supervisor): 30% of the final grade.

Professors and Mentors

For the 2nd Edition, the following professors are the responsible for the UC Sustainability for All in their respective school:

Prof. Ana Santos Pinto, NOVA FCSH - ana.pinto@fcsb.unl.pt

Prof. Ana Fontoura Gouveia, NOVA SBE - ana.gouveia@novasbe.pt

Prof. Susana Viegas, ENSP - susana.viegas@ensp.unl.pt

Prof. Nelson Saibo, ITQB - saibo@itqb.unl.pt

Prof. Rita Calçada Pires, NSL - rita.pires@novalaw.unl.pt

Prof. João Raposo & Prof. Diogo Pestana, NMS - joao.raposo@nms.unl.pt & diogopestana@nms.unl.pt

For schools without representative, please contact sustentabilidade@unl.pt

Moreover, the following tutors are engaged with the course to support students, namely on two live sessions: to be confirmed

Calendar 2026

Feb. 21 – Saturday [morning]	Welcome session: Systems Thinking for Sustainability Challenges	In person
Missions learning and accomplishing		
Live Session 1: March 31		
Deadline to submit missions assignments from SET 1 and 2: April 10		
April 11 – Saturday [morning]	Interim Session: Acting as a stakeholder.	In person
Missions learning and accomplishing		
Live Session 1: May 12		
Deadline to submit missions assignments from SET 1 and 2: May 29		
May 30 – Saturday [morning]	Closing Session: Learning together	In person

Regarding each of the in-person sessions, the registered students will receive detailed information in due time, namely the location and the program.