

Professional Diploma in Sustainable Finance Reporting and Disclosures

NFQ level 9

2024-2025

Who we are

Sustainable Finance Skillnet (SFS)

Sustainable Finance Skillnet is a national network that works to develop skills and leadership capacity to advance ESG best practice across Ireland's financial services ecosystem.

Network companies work collaboratively to share best practice and to respond effectively to the specific skills needs of the sector.

The objective of this national network is to support sustainable business growth and practices in Ireland by embedding sustainable approaches within firms through the delivery of specialised training aimed at business leaders and employees.

IOB

IOB is a professional community of over 33,200 members who work in areas such as banking, financial planning and wealth management, investment funds and international financial services. Professional development of our members through education is at the heart of what we do. IOB provides university programmes to enable our members achieve and sustain their professional qualifications and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) - essential in meeting customer and regulatory expectations. More than 6,900 individuals studied with us last year and over 23,000 members are registered for CPD schemes administered by IOB.

Excellence in education – a recognised college of UCD

As a recognised college of University College Dublin (UCD) and the standout financial services educator, we offer qualifications of the highest standard. We currently have more than 40 programmes ranging from Professional Certificates and Diplomas (level 7) on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) to Masters Degrees (level 9). We design our programmes to be practical and relevant, and grounded in academic rigour.

Welcome

Commissioned by Sustainable Finance Skillnet, the Professional Diploma in Sustainable Finance Reporting and Disclosures programme is offered by IOB, a recognised college of University College Dublin and those who successfully complete the programme will be awarded their qualification by the university. The Professional Diploma in Sustainable Finance Reporting and Disclosures aims to empower professionals working in finance, reporting, and assurance functions within the financial services industry to take the lead in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) regulatory reporting and disclosure activities. As professionals seek to meet regulatory requirements and as the implementation of new mandatory EU sustainable finance reporting obligations approaches, it is crucial for the industry to be well-prepared. The Diploma directly addresses the need for talent in this rapidly evolving field, further solidifying Ireland's position as a leading hub for sustainable finance.

The Professional Diploma in Sustainable Finance Reporting and Disclosures programme will:

- Support participants in implementing good governance regarding reporting and disclosure of current and pending ESG regulations including TCFD, ISSB, CSRD and SFDR;
- Amplify existing knowledge and expertise among professionals in the financial sector to prepare and equip them to be changemakers within their organisations when it comes to communicating and implementing ESG good practices;
- Provide participants with awareness, knowledge, practical skills, and case studies to empower them to report and disclose sustainable finance activities internally to their firms and boards and externally to shareholders and stakeholders; and
- Position Ireland as a sustainable finance knowledge leader so that Ireland becomes increasingly recognised as a centre of excellence for sustainable finance and ESG professionals.
- Support participants in developing their careers in sustainability and in order to act as sustainability leaders within their organizations.

Participating in this programme will provide hands-on opportunities to work alongside like-minded professionals and broaden your network of industry peers. It will equip you with the knowledge and skills to lead your organisation in reporting on sustainability regulations and implementing good practices within your organisation.

Upon completing this programme, you will gain the skills and resources to help you excel as a changemaker, the knowledge to address the reporting and disclosure requirements for your organisation, and a network of industry peers to support you as you progress in your finance career. Finance professionals have a key role to play in ensuring that Ireland is at the forefront of reporting and disclosure of sustainable finance activities as the financial services sector enters a crucial phase of its sustainability journey. This programme aims to support finance professionals to gain the knowledge, skills and expertise required to meet the evolving sustainable finance reporting requirements. The programme is led by experienced international faculty and features renowned guest speakers from international organisations.

Introduction

In the first module, students explore why Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) risks are financial risks. Then, they will explore the existing ESG reporting landscape that has developed over the past several years.

In the second module, students explore the regulatory frameworks that are in place around ESG and ESG reporting. They will understand the expectations set by these regulations and connect with resources that support the development of good practices around ESG and sustainability.

In the third module, students deeply engage with what ESG integration means within their own firm through a series of practical exercises and a capstone final project. They will also be exposed to case studies and examples of leading practices that they can adopt as they become sustainability leaders within their firm.

Who is this programme for?

This programme is aimed at those who are employed or aspiring to be employed in (Financial) Reporting, Risk or Finance functions, or working in dedicated Sustainability Teams with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to report, advise on, and advance the sustainability agenda across and within the financial services industry sector.

The programme will greatly enhance your knowledge and expertise of reporting and disclosures in relation to sustainable finance and provide you with the practical skills and tools to implement sustainability practices in your own organisation.

How you will benefit

On completing the Professional Diploma in Sustainable Finance Reporting and Disclosures you will be able to:

1. Explain the key concepts, theories and practice underpinning current and evolving sustainable finance reporting and disclosures
2. Apply knowledge and understanding of ESG and sustainable finance reporting for your organisation, aligned with the latest regulatory standards
3. Select and use data and assessment techniques to evaluate current sustainable finance reporting challenges and formulate appropriate response to address the issues
4. Communicate clearly to colleagues, peers, regulators and the public, the essence of and requirements for sustainable finance reporting and disclosures
5. Begin integrating good practices for reporting and sustainable finance strategy into your organisation
6. Leverage the knowledge gained in specific areas to identify and pursue further study to enhance your career and professional ambitions.

NFQ: Level 9

Academic credits: 30 ECTS

Modules: 3

Delivery: Online

Awarding body: UCD

The programme comprises of three modules as follows:

1. Existing ESG reporting frameworks
2. New ESG reporting frameworks
3. Implementing an ESG reporting framework

Module content

Module 1: Existing ESG reporting frameworks (NFQ level 9, 10 ECTS)

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Explain the various types of ESG risks, such as climate (both physical and transition risks) and nature-related risks (environmental) including their potential financial implications, and how financial actors and supervisors are beginning to address them - through disclosures, climate risk analysis, and climate stress tests among other tools
- Describe ways in which your firm may be exposed to ESG risks and how it may take advantage of ESG opportunities
- Identify the major international frameworks and their key elements including: the **Taskforce for Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)**, **Taskforce for Nature-Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)**, the **International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB)** sustainability and climate standards, and the work of other important standard setters in the space - the **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)**, **Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)**, the **Value Reporting Foundation (VRF- including SASB)**

- Dive more deeply into the 11 recommended disclosures of the TCFD framework that have been adapted for the ISSB standards and are being picked up by regulators around the world.

Module 2: New ESG reporting frameworks (NFQ level 9, 10 ECTS)

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Understand the regulatory landscape within Ireland and the EU related to current and impending ESG regulations including being able to assess what requirements your firm may have now and in the future
- Describe the objectives, structure, and timelines around the **Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD)**, the **Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)**, and the **Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)**
- Compare the elements of the CSRD to the ISSB and understand the areas of interoperability and the important differences between the guidances including their perspectives around materiality
- Consider the key elements of the range of **Environmental and Social Reporting Standards (ESRS)** developed for a variety of ESG subjects by the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG)
- Explore the EU taxonomy and apply it to evaluate activities as well as understand the expectations around sustainable finance products under the **Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR)** including Articles 6, and 8, 9 funds
- Identify practical examples and case studies of issues related to greenwashing and understand the emerging scrutiny around green claims (in funds, products, and carbon markets) as well as legal risks
- Assess the impactfulness of your firm's sustainability initiatives in light of these new standards and expectations.

Module 3: Implementing an ESG reporting framework (NFQ level 9, 10 ECTS)

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Undertake a capstone exercise to determine the ways in which ESG and sustainability fit into your current organisation's governance, strategy, risk management, and metrics and targets and conduct a gap analysis to identify areas of improvement
- Consider the different roles and responsibilities required to integrate sustainability within your firm as well as the skills required and the creation of policies and procedures to align business and operational goals with sustainability requirements
- Determine from peer best practices and case studies the elements of effective ESG disclosures, data, and assessment techniques
- Determine the types of data required to conduct sustainability analyses and the common challenges and limitations as well as case studies on how these may be overcome. In addition, understand common metrics and calculations such as the process of financed emissions calculations by Partnership for Carbon Accountant Financials, (PCAF)
- Understand the scenarios commonly used for scenario analysis such as those from the Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the International Energy Agency (IEA)
- Explore the landscape of sustainability and climate tool and data providers including being able to understand differences in methodology, key questions for vendor assessment, and benefits and limitations of approaches such as ESG scores
- Begin the process of developing a transition plan for your firm as well as net-zero targets in accordance with the work of the Glasgow Financial Alliances for Net-Zero (GFANZ), the UN's Race to Zero, the Science-based Targets Initiative, and the European regulations discussed in module 2
- Develop an implementation plan to advance sustainability and ESG reporting within your firm in line with relevant Irish and EU ESG reporting requirements.

Award

Upon successful completion of the programme you will be awarded with the Professional Diploma in Sustainable Finance Reporting and Disclosures from UCD. This is a level 9 qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Entry requirements

The minimum entry requirements to the Professional Diploma in Sustainable Finance Reporting and Disclosures are as follows:

- An Honours degree (min. 2.2 L8 NFQ)

OR

- Admission may be considered for experienced professionals who do not meet the admission requirements as set out above, where they can demonstrate knowledge through their work i.e. they have more than 5 years' experience in a management role (to be considered on a case by case basis).

Delivery

This programme is delivered online on a part-time basis. Each module will have a weekly workplan throughout the trimester. There will be three full day instructor led webinars for each module which will be recorded and available to students.

Assessment

100% continuous assessment.

Fees

This programme qualifies for up to 30% funding through Sustainable Finance Skillnet.

Module	Module fee	Sustainable Finance Skillnet fee
Existing ESG reporting frameworks	€1,760	€1,232
New ESG reporting frameworks	€1,760	€1,232
Implementing an ESG reporting framework	€1,760	€1,232
Total	€5,280	€3,696

Professional body membership

You must be a current member of IOB to apply for this programme.

How to apply

For further information on this programme and to apply please contact skills@isfcoe.org or visit iob.ie/programme/sustainable-finance-reporting-and-disclosures

Contact us

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