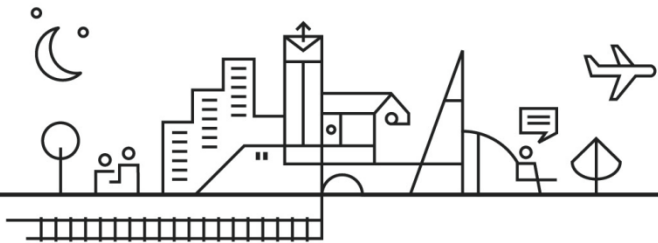# IEMA Practitioner Membership Standard

IEMA
Transforming the world to sustainability

Introduction

There are 13 Learning Outcomes covered within the Practitioner membership standard which align to the Operational level of the IEMA Skills Map. These are split into the areas of core knowledge, technical knowledge and skills.

The technical knowledge section is split into environment and socio-economic. Those who wish to take the environment exam related to this Standard will be assessed on only the environment related learning outcomes but those who wish to take the sustainability exam will be assessed on the environment and socio-economic related learning outcomes.

As a general guide, the recommended study time is 120 hours to ensure coverage of these learning outcomes. However, as every learner has a different background and learning style, please use as much time as required to feel confident in meeting the Practitioner standard.

Learning Outcomes

The 13 Learning Outcomes are listed below:

Core Knowledge

1. Explain the implications of global trends for the environment, for society, for the economy and for organisations

2. Explain sustainable business/governance models, their underlying principles and their relationship with organisations, products and services

Technical Knowledge

3. Explain environmental / socio-economic principles and their relationship with organisations, products and services

4. Explain major policy and legislation and their implications for organisations, products and services

5. Explain major and relevant tools, techniques, systems and practices, their application and how they can be used to develop sustainable products and services and improve sustainability performance

6. Explain the role of innovation and other leading practices in developing sustainable products and services and providing sustainable solutions

Skills

7. Collect and critically analyse data, and report information that informs decision making

8. Identify problems and assess opportunities that deliver innovative and sustainable products and services

9. Determine, implement and measure methods of effective communication

10. Identify and engage in two way communication with stakeholders

11. Apply or implement tools, techniques, systems and practices that identify opportunities and risks

12. Deliver projects and programmes that achieve performance improvement

13. Implement change and transformation

Detailed assessment criteria and scope for each learning outcome are provided on the following pages.

Command Words

A number of Command Words are used within the Learning Outcomes and associated Assessment Criteria to help learners understand the level of detail required. These include:

Identify/Recognise: Stating the name or identifying the characteristics/main point of something. Normally a name, word or phrase will be sufficient, provided the reference is clear.

Outline: Stating the most important features of something. Equivalent to a thin description but involves more than simply listing.

Describe: Providing a thorough description and enough detail about an item for a learner to have a clear picture of it.

Explain: Providing a detailed response (definition and explanation). 'Explain' may involve giving reasons for something, linking causes and effects, drawing parallels, pointing to relationships or showing how theory can be applied.

Assess/Analyse: Subject something to critical analysis in order to make a judgement about its value, use, suitability, integrity or accuracy.

Interpret: Interpret a set of data by describing the main trends, highlighting any anomalies, then providing an explanation of the data based on knowledge and understanding of the particular subject area.

Monitor: Observe and check the progress or quality of (something) over a period of time; keep under systematic review.

Demonstrate/Show: Provide a practical exhibition and explanation of how a skill, task, tool, technique or system is performed.

Apply/Implement: Carry out or put into practice a specific skill, task, tool, technique or system.

Deliver: Produce the promised, desired, or expected results**.**

Challenge: To question the validity of something e.g. a practice, behaviour, system or rule

Practitioner Standard in Detail

Core Knowledge

Learning Outcome (the learner will…)	Assessment criteria (the learner will be able to demonstrate knowledge by…)	Prescribed Content (the learner will be familiar with…)
Fundamentals of Sustainability		
1. Explain the implications of global trends for the environment, for society, for the economy and for organisations and the role of an Environment/Sustainability practitioner in overcoming these challenges	1.1. Explaining the global **mega-trends** driving the need to transform the world to sustainability 1.2. Explaining the concept of **sustainable development** 1.3. Explaining how the UN's Sustainable Development Goals provide a framework for action 1.4. Describing the five **sustainable capitals** and the dependencies between them 1.5. Explaining how **environmental limits** and the equalities agenda are fundamental to maintaining economic growth and sustainable capital 1.6. Explaining how current economic activity regularly creates unintended environmental and social consequences, locally and globally 1.7. Describing the role of an Environment/Sustainability practitioner and how this requires the application of **sustainability skills** to overcome internal and external challenges	**Mega Trends:** Climate Change (GHG and climate consequences), population, global middle class, urbanisation, pivot to asia-pacific market, resource scarcity, biodiversity loss **Sustainable Development:** Brundtland definition; triple bottom line (environment, society and economy) **Sustainable Capital:** Natural, Social, Human, Financial and Manufactured/Built **Environmental Limits:** Planetary boundaries concept (Stockholm Institute) **Sustainability Skills:** IEMA Skills Map (overview of all the various skills required and introduction to module 3 where skills will be explored in further detail)
Fundamental Business and Governance Principles and Issues		
2. Explain sustainable business/governance models,	2.1. Describing the role of ethics in individual and organisational decision making	**Corporate Responsibility, Corporate Sustainability and Sustainable Business:** IEMA-

Learning Outcome (the learner will…)	Assessment criteria (the learner will be able to demonstrate knowledge by…)	Prescribed Content (the learner will be familiar with…)
their underlying principles and their relationship with organisations, products and services	2.2. Explaining the importance of accountability, equalities (incl: gender equality), inclusivity, integrity, stewardship, transparency, cultural context and engagement 2.3. Explaining the importance of **corporate responsibility, corporate sustainability and sustainable business** 2.4. Describing the differences between balancing and **resolving** interactions between social, environmental and economic issues in the context of sustainable development 2.5. Explaining the concept of **safe operating space** and to what extent they can impact an organisation 2.6. Describing the **sustainable business models** that will help drive the transition to a sustainable economy	GACSO lexicon definition **Resolving:** Finding a complete solution, rather than accepting impacts in one area are offset by benefits elsewhere **Safe Operating Space:** Rockstrom, Raworth **Sustainable Business Models:** Doughnut economics, green economy, blue economy, circular economy

Technical Knowledge

This section is split into Environmental and Socio-Economic themes.

Those who wish to take the environment exam related to this Standard will be assessed on only the environment related learning outcomes but those who wish to take the sustainability exam will be assessed on the environment and socio-economic related learning outcomes.

Environment

Learning Outcome (the learner will…)	Assessment criteria (the learner will be able to demonstrate knowledge by…)	Prescribed Content (the learner will be familiar with…)
Fundamental Environmental Issues and Principles		
3. Explain environmental principles and their relationship with organisations, products and services	3.1. Explaining the importance of **natural cycles, ecological systems, ecosystem services** and **environmental limits** and their impact on your organisation 3.2. Explaining the impact of human interventions on natural ecological systems, habitats, species and individuals 3.3. Describing **pollution sources, pathways and receptors**	**Natural Cycles:** Carbon, Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Water **Ecological Systems:** Plants and animals and their interactions with non-living components including energy **Ecosystem Services:** Supporting, Provisioning, Regulating and Cultural **Environmental Limits:** Planetary boundaries concept (Stockholm Institute) **Pollution Sources, Pathways and Receptors:** Including the concept of pollution linkages
Policy, Regulation and Legislation		
4. Explain major policy and legislation and their implications for organisations, products and services	4.1. Explaining how sustainability issues link to policy 4.2. Outlining the main **types of law** and the relationship between international, national and sub-national law	**Types of Law:** Common, Statute, Civil and Criminal law (in jurisdictions where they exist) **Policy Instruments:** Fiscal, legislative, market and voluntary instruments

Learning Outcome (the learner will…)	Assessment criteria (the learner will be able to demonstrate knowledge by…)	Prescribed Content (the learner will be familiar with…)
	4.3. Describing key **policy instruments** in place and how they are used to achieve sustainable change 4.4. Explaining key environmental **principles** and how they have been applied within policies 4.5. Explaining key **environmental legislation** 4.6. Outlining the role of **environmental regulators** and **penalties** for non-compliance 4.7. Identifying relevant stakeholders that influence environmental issues and policy development 4.8. Explaining the benefits and opportunities organisations can achieve in moving beyond compliance	**Principles** of environmental policy: Polluter Pays, Precautionary Principle, Best Available Technique, Hierarchy Approach, Producer Responsibility, Lifecycle Thinking **Environmental Legislation:** Legislation in relation to natural environment, air, water, land, energy, waste, resources, climate change, planning and producer responsibility **Environmental Regulators:** National regulators appropriate to country or region of operation/activity (in jurisdictions where they exist) **Penalties:** Civil and criminal sanctions (in jurisdictions where they exist)
Management and Assessment Tools		
5. Explain major and relevant tools, techniques, systems and practices, their application and how they can be used to develop sustainable products and services and improve sustainability performance	5.1. Explaining the **application** of major **environmental management tools**, techniques, systems and practices, their advantages and disadvantages 5.2. Explaining the concept of lifecycle thinking, its benefits and challenges 5.3. Explaining the different roles **people** play in delivering sustainable outcomes 5.4. Describing the tools, techniques, systems and/or practices used by organisations to manage compliance and non-compliance	**Application:** purpose, stages in the process of implementation, relevant standards and guidelines **Environmental Management Tools:** Focus within this course should be on Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and Audit (energy, environment). Brief coverage of the following: Environmental Management Plans (EMP), Impact Assessment (EIA, SEA, EcIA), Lifecycle Thinking (LCA, footprinting, hotspot analysis), Corporate

Learning Outcome (the learner will…)	Assessment criteria (the learner will be able to demonstrate knowledge by…)	Prescribed Content (the learner will be familiar with…)
	5.5. Describing the role **verification and assurance** plays in improving sustainability performance	Reporting **People:** Sustainability profession, leaders (organisational), wider professions, everyone **Verification and Assurance:** Including accounting principles 'materiality, responsiveness and completeness'
Innovative and Leading Practices		
6. Explain the role of innovation and other leading practices in developing sustainable products and services and providing sustainable solutions	6.1. Explaining how innovation and other leading practices can be used to develop sustainable products and services and provide sustainable solutions 6.2. Explaining innovation and how the principles of innovation can be applied in any given context	It is expected that a variety of case studies are provided from different sectors e.g. energy, transport, manufacturing, the built environment and agriculture

Socio-Economic

Learning Outcome (the learner will…)	Assessment criteria (the learner will be able to demonstrate knowledge by…)	Prescribed Content (the learner will be familiar with…)
Fundamental Socio-Economic Issues and Principles		
3. Explain socio-economic principles and their relationship with organisations, products and services	3.1. Explaining the importance of the need to tackle global inequalities, a **social protection floor** and their impact on your organisation	**Social Protection Floor:** access to essential health care (including maternity care), basic income security for children, persons unable to work and older persons.
	3.2. Explaining the impact of human interventions on social systems, cultural practices, community cohesion and individuals	
	3.3. Describing the social and physical determinants of health	
Policy, Regulation and Legislation		
4. Explain major policy and legislation and their implications for organisations, products and services	4.1. Explaining how sustainability issues link to policy	**Types of Law:** Common, Statute, Civil and Criminal law (in jurisdictions where they exist)
	4.2. Outlining the main **types of law** and the relationship between international, national and sub-national law	**Policy Instruments:** Fiscal, legislative, market and voluntary instruments
	4.3. Describing key **policy instruments** in place and how they are used to achieve sustainable change	**Principles** of socio-economic policy: People Centred, responsive and participatory, multi-level, conducted in partnership, sustainable, dynamic
	4.4. Explaining key socio-economic **principles** and how they have been applied within policies	
	4.5. Explaining key **legislation**	**Social Legislation:** Legislation in relation to human rights, equality, gender, labour rights, health and safety, inclusivity, diversity, engagement, healthcare, income security, and well being
	4.6. Outlining the role of **regulators** and **penalties** for non-compliance	
	4.7. Identifying relevant stakeholders that influence socio-economic issues and policy development	**Regulators:** National regulators appropriate to country or region of operation/activity (in

Learning Outcome (the learner will…)	Assessment criteria (the learner will be able to demonstrate knowledge by…)	Prescribed Content (the learner will be familiar with…)
		jurisdictions where they exist)
	4.8. Explaining the benefits and opportunities organisations can achieve in moving beyond compliance	**Penalties:** Civil and criminal sanctions (in jurisdictions where they exist)
Management and Assessment Tools		
5. Explain major and relevant tools, techniques, systems and practices, their application and how they can be used to develop sustainable products and services and improve sustainability performance	5.1. Explaining the **application** of major **socio-economic management tools**, techniques, systems and practices, their advantages and disadvantages 5.2. Explaining the concept of lifecycle thinking, its benefits and challenges 5.3. Explaining the different roles **people** play in delivering sustainable outcomes 5.4. Describing the tools, techniques, systems and/or practices used by organisations to manage compliance and non-compliance 5.5. Describing the role **verification and assurance** plays in improving sustainability performance	**Application:** purpose, stages in the process of implementation, relevant standards and guidelines **Socio-Economic Management Tools:** Impact Assessment (Social, Health, Human Rights), Socio-Economic Surveys, Stakeholder Engagement, Auditing (labour, human rights), Corporate Reporting **People:** Sustainability profession, leaders (organisational), wider professions, everyone **Verification and Assurance:** Including accounting principles 'materiality, responsiveness and completeness'
Innovative and Leading Practices		
6. Explain the role of innovation and other leading practices in developing sustainable products and services and providing sustainable solutions	6.1. Explaining how innovation and other leading practices can be used to develop sustainable products and services and provide sustainable solutions 6.2. Explaining innovation and how the principles of innovation can be applied in any given context	

Skills

Learning Outcome (the learner will…)	Assessment criteria (the learner will be able to demonstrate knowledge by…)	Prescribed Content (the learner will be familiar with…)
Analytical Thinking		
7. Collect and critically analyse data, and report information that informs decision making	7.1. Identifying relevant sources of **data** and describing techniques used to collect, process, and store accurate data 7.2. Explaining the importance of relevant and accurate data 7.3. Analysing and interpreting data / information to draw appropriate conclusions and make practical recommendations that improve sustainability performance 7.4. Monitoring a programme to improve sustainability performance using appropriate methods	**Data:** Absolute and Normalised data, Qualitative and Quantitative data
Problem Reframing and Resolution		
8. Identify problems and assess opportunities that deliver innovative and sustainable products and services	8.1. Identifying the benefits of research, planning and keeping up-to-date with **innovations** to provide sustainable solutions 8.2. Identifying challenges to sustainability and reframing them as opportunities	**Innovations:** Academic research, developments by competitors, other sectors and wider stakeholders, new business models
Effective Communication		
9. Determine, implement and measure methods of effective communication	9.1. Explain the role effective communication plays in achieving sustainable outcomes 9.2. Identifying the interests and viewpoints of relevant **internal and external stakeholders** 9.3. Explaining how communication methods need to be adapted to ensure meaningful engagement	**Internal Stakeholders:** Leadership Team, Operations, Finance, Other Specific Departments, All Staff **External Stakeholders:** Partners, Clients, Customers, Suppliers, Shareholders, Regulators, Local Community

Learning Outcome (the learner will…)	Assessment criteria (the learner will be able to demonstrate knowledge by…)	Prescribed Content (the learner will be familiar with…)
	9.4. Demonstrating effective use of communication skills and understanding how communication methods can facilitate improved performance	
	9.5. Describing the differences between informing, consulting and engaging	
Relationship Development		
10. Identify and engage in two way communication with stakeholders	10.1. Identifying the benefits of collaboration and cooperation in responding to sustainability challenges, particularly when facing the same issues	**Broader Structures:** Different functions in the same organisation; value-chain, sectoral and cross-sector, between different countries
	10.2. Working collaboratively in teams and across **broader structures** and networks	
	10.3. Using a positive, proactive and resourceful approach to delivering tasks and working with others	
Resilience, Risk and Continual Improvement		
11. Apply or implement tools, techniques, systems and practices that identify opportunities and risks	11.1. Demonstrating selection and use of appropriate tools, techniques and systems to identify **risks and opportunities**	**Risks and Opportunities:** At an operational and organisational level, risks and opportunities to the environment, risks and opportunities presented by a changing environment
	11.2. Showing how identifying and tackling risks to the delivery of products and services can achieve resilience in changing and dynamic world	
Delivering Sustainable Solutions		
12. Deliver projects and programmes that achieve performance improvement	12.1. Describing how a long-term vision for sustainability, with milestones and targets, facilitates delivery of sustainable products and services	
	12.2. Demonstrating use of key project management techniques that have delivered sustainable outcomes	

Learning Outcome (the learner will…)	Assessment criteria (the learner will be able to demonstrate knowledge by…)	Prescribed Content (the learner will be familiar with…)
	12.3. Demonstrating how a financial return on investment and wider benefits create a business case for sustainability	
	12.4. Demonstrating how contracting and procurement is a vital component of improving sustainability performance	
Leadership for Change		
13.Implement change and transformation	13.1. Demonstrating knowledge of change management principles	
	13.2. Explaining how organisational culture contributes to improved sustainability performance	
	13.3. Identifying common barriers to creating positive sustainability cultures	
	13.4. Challenging unsustainable business behaviours	