



# MAKING SUSTAINABILITY PART OF THE STUDENT PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

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# Placements

- ▶ A form of work-based learning
- ▶ Students gain early career experience
- ▶ Students link academic theory to industry practice
- ▶ A low-cost way for companies to complement their recruitment strategies



Companies are looking  
for **skilled** people.

Are you **ready?**

**For Placements**



# At CEM...

| Module   | SAND 2802   | SAND 2901       | SAND 5801 | SAND 2803 | SAND 2804 |
|----------|-------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Duration | 1 year      |                 |           | Summer    |           |
| School   | Engineering | Computing & LMS | All       | LMS       | Other     |
| Level    | Undergrad   | Undergrad       | Postgrad  | Undergrad | Undergrad |
| Credits  | 0           | 30              | 0         | -         | -         |

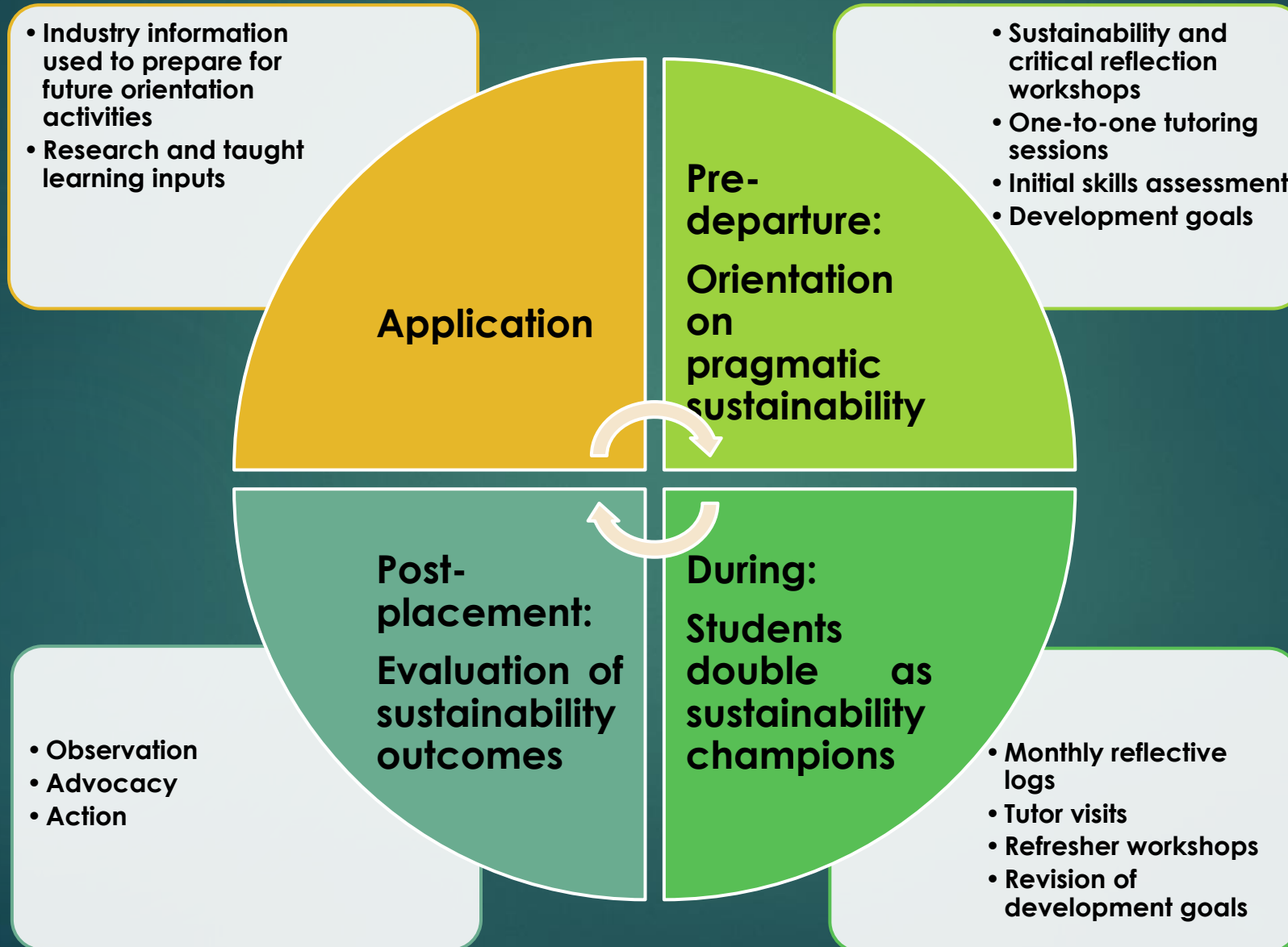
# The Sustainability Angle

- ▶ Due to size and resource constraints, many SMEs in particular do not prioritise sustainability beyond the surface level
- ▶ SMEs are often viewed simply as smaller versions of large firms (Darcy et al., 2014)
- ▶ Sustainability tools and systems can be viewed as abstract (Shields & Shelleman, 2015)

# Repositioning Placements

| From   | To  |
|--|---|
| Reservations about the application of university learning    | More visible relevance to industry                                      |
| Scepticism about the preparedness of students for employment | Greater visibility of practical value                                   |
| A simple, disconnected add-on to taught learning             | Deeper integration into pedagogy and research                           |
| A standard work experience scheme                            | A dual-purpose of experiential learning and sustainability championship |

# Method



# Engagement

| Outcomes    | Description   | Main benefitting stakeholder(s) | Sample of student reflection  |
|-------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Observation | Student investigates company's environmental and social performance   | Student<br>University           | <i>'There are a few good examples... on site - the first being the canteen on site uses biodegradable boxes...'</i> |
| Awareness   | Student champions sustainability by promoting awareness, contributing to proposals/plans, gaining knowledge | Company<br>Student              | <i>'I am creating a technical procedure for semi-finishing process (precision manufacturing)...'</i>                |
| Advocacy    | Student is involved in the implementation of sustainability measures/initiatives                            | Company<br>Student              | <i>'I learnt how we can conserve energy, reduce wastes and reduce consumption of water in workplace...'</i>         |

# 2020/21 Placement by the Numbers

- ▶ 98 students on placement
- ▶ Highest workshop attendance (29 in the July 2020 workshop)
- ▶ 37 students have actively engaged with sustainability
- ▶ 14 focused mainly on observation, 3 on awareness, and 6 on action
- ▶ 8 had dual-focus, 6 mixed



# Going Forward

- ▶ Move sustainability from an informal 'sub-module' to a formal elective.
- ▶ 'Tall' vs 'Wide' vs 'Standard' critical reflection routes
- ▶ Study long-term results of the current approach
- ▶ Greater synergy between taught and experiential learning

# References

- ▶ Darcy, C, Hill, J, McCabe, T, McGovern, P (2014). A Consideration of Organisational Sustainability in the SME Context: A Resource-based View and Composite Model. *European Journal of Training and Development*. 38(5). Pp.398-414. DOI:10.1108/EJTD-10-2013-0108.
- ▶ Shields, J, Shelleman, J (2015). Integrating Sustainability into SME Strategy. *Journal of Small Business Strategy*. 25 (2). Pp. 59-78.



**PAID INTERNSHIPS**

**NEXT EXIT**

**THANK YOU!!!**

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