

# STEWARDSHIP FOR SUSTAINABILITY: LEADING IN TURBULENT TIMES

Executive Education at Oxford Sustainable Finance Group  
*University of Oxford and ShareAction / 30 July - 1 August 2025*







# WELCOME TO THE STEWARDSHIP FOR SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

A growing number of people in the finance community are responsible for stewardship. Effective stewardship helps safeguard financial returns as well as generating environmental and social outcomes that serve clients and beneficiaries. The task of stewardship became significantly more challenging over the last year. The programme will support professionals and leaders of investment organisations to understand and navigate this new complexity.

Stewardship has always required significant skill and judgement, typically established over many years of practical experience. There has been little formal professional development available to accelerate the specific skillset for stewardship and to manage an accelerating set of legal and geopolitical risks.

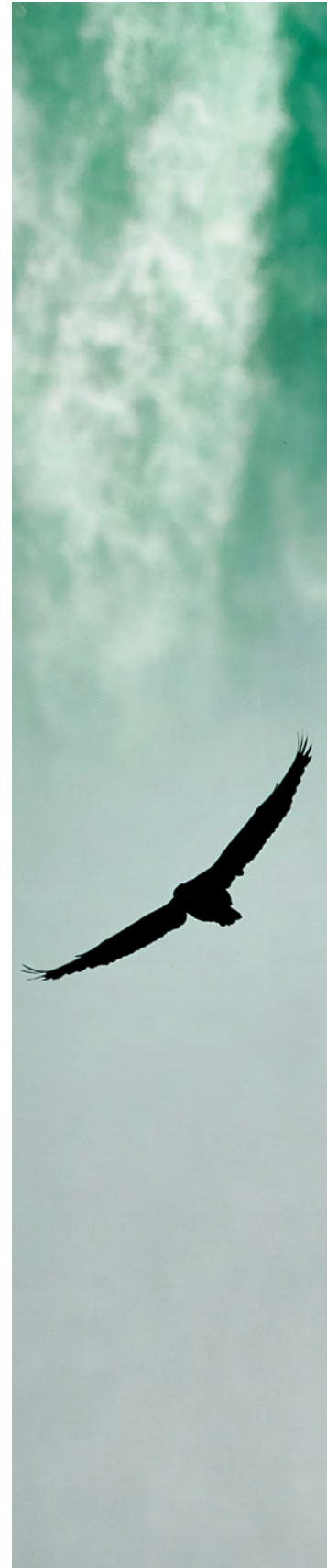
This three-day residential executive education and leadership development programme has been designed to offer an intellectually rigorous and engaging experience that builds skills, insights and networks relevant to effective stewardship and engagement across the financial system.

The programme has been designed and developed collaboratively by the Oxford Sustainable Finance Group and ShareAction, pooling the University of Oxford's academic excellence and ShareAction's deep experience of co-ordinating successful engagement initiatives globally.

The teaching faculty includes leading sustainable finance academics from the UK, continental Europe, and the USA whose research explores what makes stewardship successful and what factors inhibit positive outcomes. Sessions will also be led by people with long experience of designing and delivering stewardship initiatives involving stakeholders from across the world, while navigating cross border dynamics.

During the programme, participants will explore current and emerging engagement strategies; discuss data and analysis to inform engagement; and consider the role of policymakers, regulators, companies, and civil society in enhancing –or frustrating– effective engagement.

The programme will provide participants with a range of tools for engagement escalation and for evaluation of outcomes. The course is grounded in real-world examples of stewardship, and participants will engage in practical exercises to apply and develop their stewardship capabilities.





By bringing together participants from multiple geographies for an immersive and relational educational experience, participants will establish professional contacts of enduring value that serve the interests of their organisations long after the course is completed.

This programme is designed to support individuals working in a range of roles across the financial system, including asset managers, pension funds, sovereign wealth funds, endowments, insurers, investment consultants, data providers and lawyers. The course is also well-suited to people working in companies, civil society, governments, or regulators who are interested in understanding the principles, practices, and future direction of engagement and stewardship focused on environmental and social sustainability.

Participants will become part of the growing alumni community at Oxford and will receive invitations to events and conferences at the University. All alumni also receive a 15% discount on all other Oxford Sustainable Finance Group open enrolment executive courses.

We are grateful for you considering this programme and hope that we may have the opportunity to meet you in Oxford.

**Dr Ben Caldecott**

*Director, Oxford Sustainable Finance Group  
and the Lombard Odier Associate Professor  
and Senior Research Fellow*

**Catherine Howarth OBE**

*Chief Executive, ShareAction*





## PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The programme is held over three consecutive days at the University of Oxford. The objectives of the programme are to enable participants to:

- Explore current and emerging engagement strategies being delivered in a more complex geo-political context; understand the data and analysis that can inform engagement.
- Examine approaches for effective stewardship of systemic risks.
- Investigate developments in regulation and technology that prompt and enable engagement.
- Engage in practical exercises to apply and develop stewardship capabilities.
- Consider the role of policymakers, regulators, companies, lawyers and civil society in enhancing – or frustrating – effective engagement.
- Forge a global network of like-minded finance professionals that are approaching sustainability from different angles and perspectives.
- Learn from, challenge, and engage in conversation with leading Oxford faculty and expert practitioners who blend research with experience.
- Undertake a unique ‘Oxford experience’ and a residential programme which explores the history and culture that the city has to offer including walking tours and candlelit college dinners.



## PROGRAMME DIRECTORS



**Catherine Howarth OBE** joined ShareAction as Chief Executive in 2008. ShareAction's mission is to define the highest standards of responsible investment and to promote those standards across the world. Working closely with investors in many jurisdictions, ShareAction drives accelerated

action by listed companies on climate change, loss of biodiversity, decent work and public health.

Catherine was recognised by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader in 2014 and in 2022 was awarded an OBE for 'services to sustainability'. She was appointed in late 2023 to the FCA's advisory committee on ESG. She is a member of the HM Treasury's asset management taskforce, where she co-chaired a programme of work on investor stewardship in 2020. Since 2024 she has been a board member of Nest Pensions, the UK's largest pension fund by membership



**Dr Ben Caldecott** is the founding Director of the Oxford Sustainable Finance Group at the University of Oxford Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment. At the University of Oxford, he is the inaugural Lombard Odier Associate Professor of Sustainable Finance, the first

ever endowed professorship of sustainable finance, and a Supernumerary Fellow at Oriel College, Oxford. Ben is also the founding Director and Principal Investigator of the UK Centre for Greening Finance & Investment (CGFI), established by UK Research and Innovation in 2021 as the national centre to accelerate the adoption and use of climate and environmental data and analytics by financial institutions internationally. He is a Visiting Professor at the Wealth Management Institute in Singapore.

Ben specialises in environment, energy, and sustainability issues and works at the intersection between finance, public policy, and academe, having held senior roles in each domain. He has authored and edited a substantial number of publications related to sustainability and is an experienced media commentator and public speaker. His expertise and expert evidence have been recognised in high profile legal cases, including in the Federal Court of Australia and the High Court of England and Wales. He is a regular peer reviewer and has a number of trustee, board, and advisory panel appointments, including serving on the UK Climate Change Committee's Adaptation Committee, DBS Bank's Board Sustainability Committee, UK Export Finance's Export Guarantees Advisory Council, and as a Trustee of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).



## PROGRAMME CONTENT

### DAY I

- Programme overview and introduction
- The state of stewardship in 2025
- Stewardship: What works?
- Case Study: Engaging the European banking sector

### DAY II

- Navigating the new complexity: designing for impact in turbulent times
- The Art and Discipline of Escalation
- Legal and Geopolitical Risk: understanding the new playground
- Designing engagement campaigns

### DAY III

- The future of stewardship (II): Towards implementation
- The view from the company
- Negotiation and the engagement process
- Programme synthesis and feedback

*Please note content is illustrative and subject to change*





## FEES

The programme fee is £4,750 for attendees from the private sector, and £3,750 for attendees from the non-for-profit/public sectors. The programme fee includes all teaching costs, accommodation, breakfast, lunch and several dinners. It does not include the cost of travel to and from Oxford, visas, or any personal expenses you may incur.

## ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation will be provided for three nights, and all bedrooms will be randomly allocated. Extensions to accommodation are available on request, but dependent on availability. Check-in is from Tuesday 29 July, and check-out is on Friday 1 August.

## APPLICATIONS

Applications for the programme are reviewed on an ongoing basis, and until the programme reaches capacity. Applicants are expected to demonstrate their suitability for the programme in terms of:

- The relevance of the programme to their occupation and organisation.
- Their experience and potential, particularly in areas related to programme content.

The application form is available online at our website:

**<https://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/course/stewardship-and-engagement-leadership-programme>**



## SELP IN 2024

The inaugural Stewardship and Leadership Programme, held in June 2024, brought together 37 leading stewardship professionals from around the world, with representatives from Europe, Asia, Australasia and the Americas. The cohort included asset managers, asset owners, advisory firms, regulators, NGOs and funding organisations.

## ONLINE FEEDBACK FROM THE 2024 COHORT

- "Enriching"... "Valuable"... "Inspiring"
- "An excellent mix of academic research, first-hand experiences, practical case studies and industry insights"
- "3 days of incredible learning and the opportunity to build a community of passionate stewardship professionals"
- "We left as a coalition of pioneers determined to take the lessons learned and connections made to further advance the cause within our respective organisations"
- "I come back with a reinvigorated sense of purpose and motivation to push stewardship and engagement as strong levers of change. I also feel privileged to have met so many people from across the globe, some friends and connections for life!"

## PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS

- 100% of responding participants felt their understanding of stewardship improved because of the course.
- The average level of knowledge in engagement and stewardship increased by 10 per cent from responses prior to the course.\*
- Participants felt that, out of 10, the course improved skills (8.06), provided insights (8.45) and developed networks (8.97) for stewardship.

\*Comparison made with a similar question in the course application form answered by all participants.





## OXFORD SUSTAINABLE FINANCE GROUP

**The Oxford Sustainable Finance Group, at the University of Oxford Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, is a multidisciplinary research centre working to be the world's best place for research and teaching on sustainable finance and investment. We were established in 2012 to align the theory and practice of finance and investment with global environmental sustainability.**

We research environment-related risks, impacts, and opportunities across sectors, geographies, and asset classes; how such factors are emerging and how they affect asset values; how this might be correlated; their materiality; who will be affected; and what affected groups can do to manage risk. We have conducted pioneering research on stranded assets and continue to do so. We are in the process of establishing the Environmental Stress Testing and Scenarios Programme (ESTS), which will deliver the next generation of stress tests and scenarios to enhance the resilience of the global financial system to climate and environmental risks.

The production of high-quality research on the materiality of environment-related factors is a necessary, though insufficient, condition for these factors to be successfully integrated into decisionmaking. Consequently, we develop the data, analytics, frameworks, and models required to enable the integration of this information.

We are pioneers and advocates of 'spatial finance', which brings geo-spatial capabilities into financial analysis. We are developing new asset-level datasets through data science and combining these with new approaches to spatial analysis, scenarios, and stress tests.

We also research barriers to the adoption of practices related to sustainable finance and investment. This includes the role of governance, norms, behaviour, and cognition, as well as policy and financial regulation in shaping investment decisions and capital allocation.

We work with leading practitioners from across the investment chain (including actuaries, asset owners, asset managers, accountants, banks, data providers, investment consultants, lawyers, ratings agencies, stock exchanges), with firms and their management, and with experts from a wide range of related subject areas (including finance, economics, management, geography, data science, anthropology, climate science, law, area studies, psychology).

The Global Sustainable Finance Advisory Council that guides our work contains many of the key individuals and organisations working on sustainable finance. The Council also has a role in helping to informally co-ordinate and share information on sustainable finance and stranded assets work internationally. The Oxford Sustainable Finance Group's founding Director is Dr Ben Caldecott.



## SHAREACTION

ShareAction is a non-profit organisation operating in the UK and EU to promote a global investment sector which takes responsibility for its impacts on people and the planet. We aim to define the highest standards of responsible investment and to promote these standards until universally upheld.

ShareAction works closely and collaboratively with investors of all sizes and in all jurisdictions to activate their power to improve labour standards, address the climate crisis, protect the natural world, and enable global public health outcomes. Over the last 18 years, ShareAction has developed and deployed a distinctive toolkit. The tools we use amplify each other. The ShareAction toolkit includes: meticulous research on investors and companies; investor-led corporate campaigns; policy advocacy and regulatory engagement; and mobilization of the public and civil society organisations. Working with like-minded allies inside and beyond the investment sector, we are committed to driving responsibility into the heart of mainstream investment.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

W: <https://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/course/stewardship-and-engagement-leadership-programme>

E: [selp@smithschool.ox.ac.uk](mailto:selp@smithschool.ox.ac.uk)  
[investorengagement@shareaction.org](mailto:investorengagement@shareaction.org)





# SUSTAINABLE FINANCE EDUCATION AT OXFORD

Training current and future leaders is one of our theories of change. We offer a full range of programmes, including both open-enrolment executive and customised programmes delivered in-person, online, and blended, as well as undergraduate and graduate teaching and supervision for students enrolled at the University of Oxford.

## Open-enrolment Programmes:

- [Stewardship and Engagement Leadership Programme](#)
- [Sustainable Finance Executive Programme](#)
- [Climate-related Financial Risk Programme](#)

## Online Programmes:

- [Sustainable Finance: ESG and the Future of Finance](#)

## Customised Programmes:

- Customised programmes are individually tailored for organisations to enable them to engage critically with systems and theories in sustainable finance and investment.

## Public and Third Sector Academy for Sustainable Finance (P3S Academy):

- The P3S Academy is a global centre of learning and capacity building focused on enabling the public and third sectors to grasp the opportunities associated with sustainable finance. Established in 2021, the P3S Academy supports central and local government, regulators, supervisory authorities, multilateral institutions, campaigning NGOs, charities, and philanthropy with access to significantly subsidised and free training on sustainable finance topics.

## Degree Awarding:

- The DPhil is the University of Oxford's premier research degree, awarded to candidates who have successfully completed a major piece of original research. The course provides support and an intellectual environment to pursue your own independent research.

## Oxford Sustainable Finance Group

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