



**Stellenbosch**  
UNIVERSITY  
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UNIVERSITEIT

**CST**

Centre for  
Sustainability Transitions

# Sustainable Development 771/871 module: Introduction to Sustainability Transitions

Current global systems and activities have put us on a course that is destabilising the planet and threatening the wellbeing of people and nature. The questions asked by researchers: *How do we stay within the earth's planetary boundaries while addressing poverty and inequality, and building thriving human communities? How do we understand, facilitate and engage in the dynamics of change at multiple scales? What does a just, thriving, and equitable future look like from a global South perspective?*

The Centre for Sustainability Transitions (CST) at Stellenbosch University (SU) delves into these questions through the module, ***Sustainable Development 771/871: Introduction to Sustainability Transitions***.

This introductory module examines the rise to global prominence the challenges related to sustainability, sustainable development, sustainability transitions and transformations, and the need to navigate toward a more sustainable and just future.

The CST invites registrations from students from a wide range of postgraduate programmes at SU. The module embraces a collaborative and creative teaching and learning approach combining lectures, group work, reflection, and immersive learning. Students will learn from leading sustainability researchers and practitioners and integrate sustainability into their academic learning at SU.

# Module information

The module consists of six core themes:

Global  
sustainability crisis

Transformations and  
Seeds of the  
Good Anthropocene

Complexity and  
systems thinking

Futures and  
scenario planning

Individual and collective  
change agency

Sectoral  
transformations

The module runs over five weeks, with an **in-person contact period from 4 March 2024 to 8 March 2024**. Students will receive preparatory reading materials and are expected to complete an assignment prior to the start of the module. In addition, all students need to complete an individual research assignment, as well as a reflective essay at the end of the module.

**Accreditation:** 15 credits. **Requirements:** NQF level 8 (for Sustainable Development 771) and NQF level 9 (for Sustainable Development 871) qualification. The module will be presented at the African Centre on Stellenbosch University's main campus, with a field visit to the Sustainability Institute.

# Module theme descriptions

## **Global sustainability crisis**

The global sustainability crisis examines the Anthropocene, the crises that characterises the new epoch, and the need to highlight development that is more sustainable. Students will be introduced to concepts including resilience, social-ecological systems, complex adaptive systems, planetary boundaries, and doughnut economics.

## **Transformations and Seeds of the Good Anthropocene**

Transformations and Seeds of the Good Anthropocene theorises the need for transformative change, requiring system-wide re-organisation across technological, economic, and social factors, resulting in new processes for a radically different future. It will use the Seeds of Good Anthropocene to explore how these transformations happen, and how humans can shape positive, desirable, and just outcomes.

## **Complexity and systems thinking**

This theme introduces systems thinking and a complexity perspective, which aids students in seeing the world differently.

To aid this shift in worldview, this theme makes use of the iceberg model of systems thinking.

## **Futures and scenario planning**

Futures and scenario planning highlights the need for future planning and developing desirable visions of the future. Students will engage with methods of participatory futures thinking including scenario development and generating future wheels while using the Three Horizon Framework.

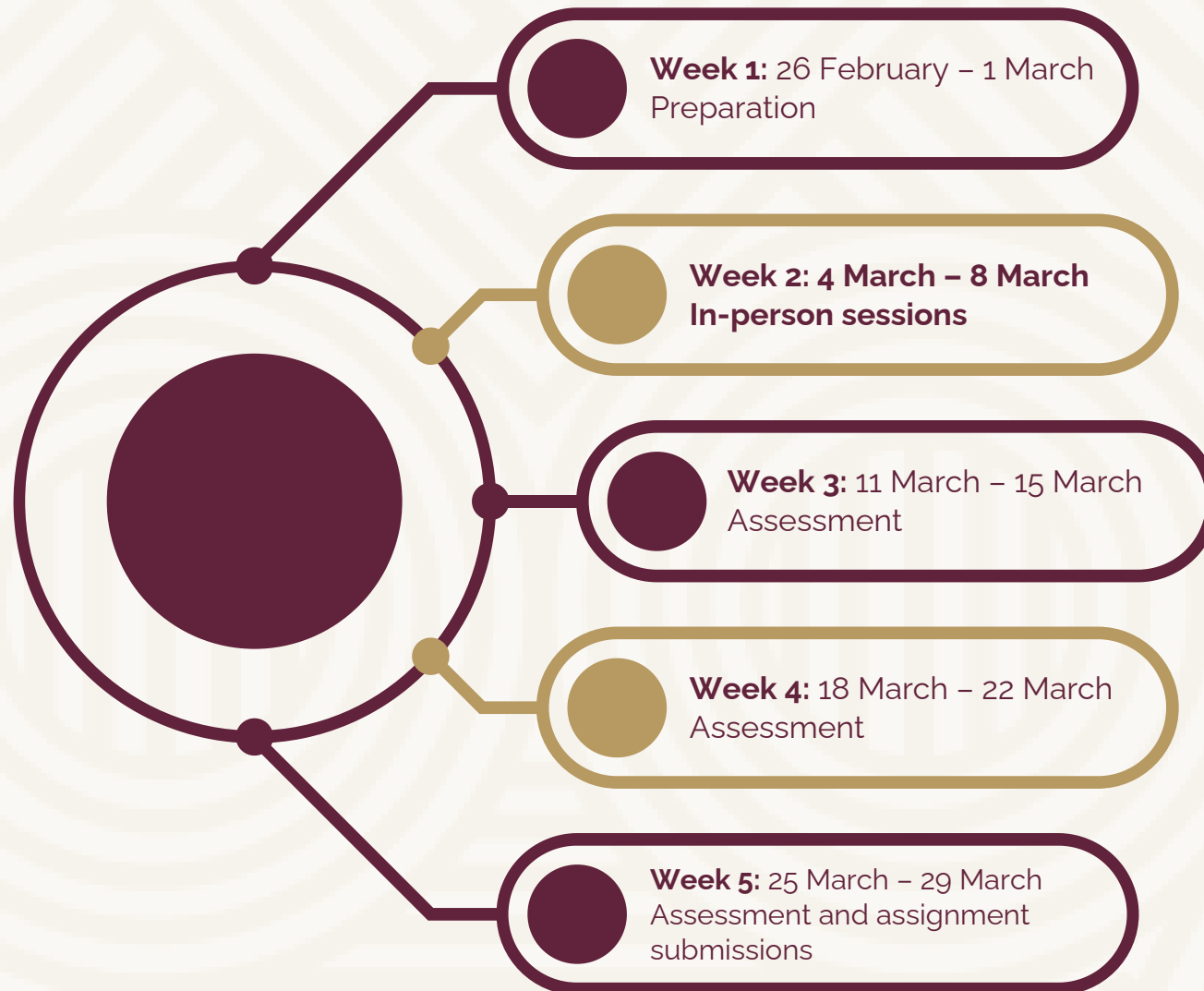
## **Being a change agent**

This theme provides pathways to being a change agent. It introduces concepts such as hegemony, relationality, radical incrementalism, and agency.

## **Sectoral transformations**

Sectoral transformations explore transformations in different sectors including urban, energy, food, and conservation. It looks at the need for transformation, the potential for future transformation that can lead to more sustainable, desirable, and just futures for people and nature.

## Dates to remember



## Registration and contact information

Register by **7 February 2024**. Interested students should register with their department programme administrators. For additional information on the module, contact Ntobsie Ngcwenga, PGDip administrative officer at the CST, at [ngcwenga@sun.ac.za](mailto:ngcwenga@sun.ac.za).



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