



Request for New College Credit Certificate

Name of Certificate Program: Global Sustainability

College: Social Science and Public Policy

Department: Geography

Proposed CIP Code: 03.0101

Certificate Program Director: Rachael Cofield

Level: Undergraduate

Graduate

Delivery Method: Face to Face

Fully Online

Semester to be Implemented: Fall 2026

Note: Must state a future semester in which students can first enroll

Substantive Change Required Approval Notification None

To be completed by Institutional Accreditation Liaison

Signed by:

Rachael Cofield

3/30/2026 | 3:50 PM EDT

Department Curriculum Committee

Date

Signed by:

Anne Chin

4/2/2026 | 11:10 PM EDT

Department Chair

Date

Signed by:

Holger Kern

4/3/2026 | 7:02 AM EDT

College Curriculum Committee

Date

Signed by:

Timothy Chapin

4/3/2026 | 7:40 AM EDT

Academic Dean

Date

Director of Institutional Performance & Assessment

Date

Institutional Accreditation Liaison

Date

Graduate School Dean or Undergraduate Policy Committee

Date

Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement

Date



Request for New College Credit Certificate Program

Revised March 12, 2026

1. Purpose of the Certificate Program

Sustainability is broadly defined as the ability of a system to indefinitely continue without doing harm. Sustainability is key to the continued existence of human life, including society, the economy, and the environments often entangled with these systems. Sustainability can be practiced through various means. Sometimes this is through the examination and management of natural processes or resources, analysis of how class and politics create nuanced environmental harm, or economic assessment of financing and tracking of supply chains. A clear and cohesive path for undergraduate students to gain education and training in sustainability practices is needed at FSU.

An undergraduate certificate in Global Sustainability signals to employers and graduate schools that a student has acquired skills in oral communication and writing, organizing, analyzing, and visualizing geographic data, and investigating and developing solutions to sustainability concerns as they play out across different scales. Companies, government agencies, and nonprofits increasingly turn to scientists trained in sustainability knowledge to develop realistic strategies for addressing pressing environmental, social, and economic problems. Completion of the certificate program of study positions students for many career paths in environmental management and finance, community resilience, and resource management. Such employment opportunities paths include:

- Sustainability Consulting and Management, professionals who help firms develop and implement eco-friendly business practices that follow local, state, and nation-wide legislation. An example job title is an 'ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) Analyst', who is a financial and strategic expert who evaluates how companies perform on Environmental, Social and Governance criteria to assess climate policies, carbon footprint, human-capital practices, supply-chain ethics, board diversity and regulatory compliance to determine a firm's sustainability performance.
- Community Resilience Planning, individuals who synthesize data on economic development, vulnerability, hazards, community development, housing, and infrastructure to create and implement plans for communities and regions. An example job title for this is a 'Resilience Coordinator', who supports resilience plans through grant writing and public education.

- Natural Resource Management and Planning, which involves science-based stewardship of resources like water, soil, forests, and wildlife to meet current human needs while ensuring future availability. An example job title is a ‘Public Lands Manager’, who oversees public land including conservation efforts and preservation programs to keep ecosystems healthy and accessible for the public.

There is a moderate existing market of students interested in topics of sustainability, broadly defined. The Geography Department surveyed students in our major and in our courses from 9/22/2025-10/2/2025. Out of 96 respondents, 45 students indicated that they were interested in the certificate, with another 20 students stating that they needed more information to decide, and only 12 students expressed disinterest. One hundred percent of respondents agreed that sustainability was topically important, even if their career goals did not significantly highlight a specific sustainability need. When asked ‘If the Global Sustainability Certificate was available when you started at FSU, would you have chosen to take courses that fit within the program?’ 71.1% of student respondents chose yes, with only 28.9% of students selecting no. This certificate will primarily serve students within the College of Social Science and Public Policy (COSSPP), as it allows students to bring sustainability methods to their majors. Many COSSPP students (510 total in the past 5 years, excluding summers) took the certificate's proposed elective courses, suggesting topical interest. A sustainability certificate would allow such students to explicitly acknowledge their coherent knowledge and skill cluster to future employers or to pursue graduate education. In addition, small but increasing numbers of EOAS students (160 in total, 86% from the GEO courses) took the certificate courses. These students are interested in the subject matter but cannot take minors outside of their home college. This is evidenced in the survey results, including a comment from one student who stated “I would love to see this somehow incorporated with the EOAS department. So many environmental science students love the topic!”

As the certificate relies on already existing courses, students will begin enrolling in Fall 2026. The Geography Undergraduate Coordinator, Rachael Cofield (rcofield@fsu.edu), will be the contact person for information regarding the certificate.

2. Substantive Change

The proposed Undergraduate Certificate in Global Sustainability falls within CIP Code Environment & Society (03.0101). The Environment & Society (03.0101) degree program falls under the same CIP Code but offers a program of study that is notably broader than what is proposed for the certificate. The envisioned certificate program focuses on multi-scalar systems thinking and problem-solving that recognizes the complex interrelationship between social, economic, and environmental spheres. The proposed certificate also differs from the Environment and Society major because it

focuses on the practices and methods within sustainability science that can be applied from the local to global scale.

The certificate takes a different approach to system relationships than the Environmental Science and Policy (03.0104) major in the Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Science Department, as that program focuses more on applied physical science and only minimally evaluates the role of social and economic systems within geoscience. The certificate also includes important elements of sustainability related to human societies, economies, or urbanization that are not discussed in the Environmental Science and Policy coursework.

Finally, this certificate program differs from Interdisciplinary Social Science's (45.0101) environmental studies concentration, as it considers the question of sustainability in the future and the role of resilience within that as part of a cohesive strategy, where students go on to put what they've learned into practice in their majors or in an internship.

The certificate represents a reframing of existing coursework drawn from Geography that provides a unique educational experience focused specifically on sustainability techniques and practices. This certificate would be offered face-to-face on the Tallahassee, Florida campus. No credit hours for the certificate may be earned at an off-campus site, except for the Panama City, Florida Campus. The Global Sustainability Certificate will be housed in the Geography Department, located in the COSSPP.

3. Certificate Application Procedures

Prospective students must be admitted as a degree-seeking undergraduate student enrolled at Florida State University. Students applying to the certificate program must complete a COSSPP Qualtrics survey. This survey is administered in both fall and spring by the college Academic Affairs Office. After completion of the survey application, the Geography Department will relay accepted students to COSSPP Academic Affairs, who will then ensure that students are enrolled into the appropriate certificate program. Questions regarding admission should be routed to the Certificate Program Director or the COSSPP Academic Affairs Office. An admissions committee consisting of faculty affiliated with the program is responsible for application review and admission recommendation to the Certificate Program Director. The certificate credential is not intended as a diploma or a degree.

4. Certificate Admissions Criteria

Students currently pursuing an undergraduate degree at Florida State University are eligible to apply. Students must be in good academic standing, with at least a 2.0 grade point average (GPA).

5. Certificate Curriculum (12 Credit Hours)

| |
|------------------------------------|
| Certificate Required Course |
|------------------------------------|

| Course Prefix and Number | Course Title | Credits | Delivery Mode (Online, Face to Face, or Both) |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------|--|
| IDS 2180 | Dead Cities (renamed <i>Future Cities in Fall 2027</i>) | 3 | Face to Face |
| IDS 2227 | Sustainable Society | 3 | Face to Face |
| GEO 4503 | Globalization | 3 | Face to Face |

Students will complete 12 credit hours of undergraduate coursework. All courses are currently taught at FSU in the COSSPP.

Students will take an introductory foundational course, IDS 2227, where they learn various strategies for applying sustainability interventions to real world challenges in the environmental, social, and economic realms. They also will take IDS 2180, Dead Cities (renamed Future Cities in Fall 2027), where they learn to communicate and propose sustainability interventions for a lay audience. Finally, students take an upper-level course, GEO 4503, where they must complete a formal research project related to a global sustainability problem. Students must then select one course from the elective course list (see table below).

Briefly, these electives support student knowledge in the pillars of sustainability (Social - GEO 4412, GEO 4700, Economic - GEO 3505, Environment - GEO 4340, GEO 4355, GEO 4357, GEO 4505) while also highlighting their interconnectedness.

In addition, with permission from the certificate program director, students may also participate in experiential learning in the form of the GEO4491 Internship course.

| Course Prefix and Number | Course Title | Credits | Delivery Mode (Online, Face to Face, or Both) |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------|--|
| Elective Course List | | | |
| GEO 3502 | Economic Geography | 3 | Face to Face |
| GEO 4340 | Living in a Hazardous Environment | 3 | Face to Face |
| GEO 4355 | Geography: Food and Environment | 3 | Face to Face |
| GEO 4357 | Environmental Conflict and Economic Development | 3 | Face to Face |
| GEO 4412 | Environment and Gender | 3 | Online |

| | | | |
|----------|--|---|--------------|
| GEO 4505 | Fossil Fuels and Environmental Conflicts | 3 | Face to Face |
| GEO 4700 | Transport Geography | 3 | Face to Face |

Total Credit Hours: ____ 12 ____

6. Certificate Retention and Completion Requirements

The Global Sustainability certificate consists of undergraduate courses already offered in the COSSPP. The coursework is intended to be completed within 2 years. The Certificate Program Director approves the student’s program of study. No transfer credits are accepted. Students must earn at least a 3.0 GPA in certificate courses to receive the certificate.

7. Certificate Program Faculty & Credentialing

| Faculty Name | Highest Degree (Type & Discipline) | Courses to be Taught in New Certificate | Other Relevant Degrees or Qualifications (If Highest Degree is not in discipline) |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Emily Billo | Terminal Degree (Geography) | GEO 4355 Geography: Food and Environment, GEO 4505 Fossil Fuels and Environmental Conflicts | |
| Rachael Cofield | Terminal Degree (Geography) | GEO 4412 Environment and Gender, GEO 4941 Internship, IDS 2227 Sustainable Society, IDS 2180 Dead Cities (<i>Future Cities in Fall 2027</i>) | |
| Nicholas Quinton | Terminal Degree (Geography) | GEO 4357 Environmental Conflict and Economic Development, GEO 4503 Globalization | |
| Carolina Velasquez-Caldero | Terminal Degree (Disaster Science and Management) | GEO 4340 Living in a Hazardous Environment | |

The core certificate faculty are credentialed to teach courses in their respective fields. These individuals and their backgrounds are as follows:

Emily Billo, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Geography. She completed her doctorate in geography in 2012 at Syracuse University. Dr. Billo’s research and teaching interests lie at the intersection of political ecology, theories of critical development, and qualitative methods. Questions of resource access and distribution, identities and social

movement formation, subjectivity and power relations are long-standing fascinations. She teaches courses in the human-environment nexus that employ a critical perspective to investigate the outcomes of environmental decision-making. She completed her doctorate in Geography in 2012 at Syracuse University.

Rachael Cofield, PhD, Undergraduate Director and Assistant Teaching Faculty, Department of Geography. Dr. Cofield's research interests combine economic theory with building sustainable urban communities, particularly within the US south context. Their courses focus on applying interdisciplinary geographic thinking to real-world problems. They earned their doctorate in Geography from Florida State University in 2021.

Nicholas Quinton, PhD, Teaching Faculty II, COSSPP. Dr. Quinton is interested in ways popular movements impact state politics and policy in a deeply interconnected world. His teaching and service draw from efforts he has joined for policy change on a range of issues locally, across the state, and region, including voting rights, redistricting, free speech and public protest, affordable housing, food insecurity, and public-school curriculum. He earned his doctorate in Geography from Florida State University in 2013.

Carolina Velasquez-Caldero, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography. She is an Environmental and Disaster Risk Management Scholar & Consultant with experience in small Caribbean Islands, like San Andrés. Her research interests are studying post-disaster recovery, social vulnerability, water-related crises, water justice, risk-informed development, and climate change adaptation. Carolina has published and is the editor of various risk and environmental management books. Her courses focus on social vulnerability, disaster public policy, risk communication, and climate change adaptation. Her career has combined positions in international organizations, centers, and renowned universities, including the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Society for International Cooperation) (GIZ), the Disaster Research Center at the University of Delaware, Military Engineering School in Colombia, and the National University of Colombia. She holds a Ph.D. in Disaster Science Management from the University of Delaware.

8. Certificate Projected Enrollments

Year 1: 15

Year 2: 30

Year 3: 50

Year 4: 75

Year 5: 100

These projections are based on an existing student base in sustainability-related courses, who we anticipate being excited to enroll. The certificate courses enrolled 1100 students since Spring 2021 (excluding summers). We anticipate modest, yet steady growth with the added incentivization of a Global Sustainability certificate.

9. Additional Resources

The Global Sustainability certificate consists of undergraduate courses already offered in the COSSPP. There is sufficient capacity in the certificate courses to accommodate the anticipated student enrollment. There is thus anticipated to be minimal impact on faculty teaching loads. Certificate advising and admission activities will increase the service assignment of the Certificate Program Director, and all core faculty members will need to have their certificate-related service activities reflected in their assignments of responsibility.

10. Certificate Institutional Effectiveness (IE)

Please see Appendix B for the two Student Learning Outcomes and Program Outcome.

11. Certificate Online Offerings

Less than 50% of the certificate program will be offered online. This is offered as a face-to-face certificate.

12. Design of Certificate and Wording

Please see a sample certificate in Appendix C.

Important Notes about Certificate Programs

Certificate Admissions

- Students completing an undergraduate degree may not enter a graduate certificate. To enter a graduate certificate program, students must be degree-seeking graduate students or post-baccalaureate non-degree students.

Certificate Completion

- If a student completes a degree program prior to completing the requirements for the certificate, the student is required to be readmitted as a degree-seeking or non-degree seeking student to complete the certificate program.

Certificate Curriculum

- Each certificate program must include at least one common course or capstone experience required of all its students.
- If a certificate program includes courses common to another certificate program, at least nine credits in the certificate program typically must not be included in the other certificate program without justification provided to and approved by the relevant academic dean(s).
- Coursework used to fulfill the requirements of a certificate program may also be used to fulfill the requirements of an undergraduate major or minor.

- An undergraduate certificate shall not require the completion of graduate courses.
- Credit earned as part of a certificate program may or may not be transferable towards an advanced degree program as determined by criteria established in the advanced degree program.
- Completion of undergraduate courses cannot count toward a graduate certificate.

Requests for Waivers of Certificate Policy Requirements

- Waivers of the provisions of the certificate policy may be granted by the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement under special or extenuating circumstances. Requests for waivers should be sent to Dr. Amy Guerette via email. Such requests should include the specific certificate provision(s) requested to be waived, rationale for the exception, and processes or procedures to remedy the issues creating the need for the waiver. Approval of waivers shall be made via email and sent to the certificate director and the Registrar's Office.

Notes on Process

1. The proposal is initiated by the director of the proposed certificate program, who submits it through the following approval sequence:
 - a. Department Curriculum Committee (or Advisory Committee for Institute or Center)
 - b. Department Chair (or Director of School, Institute or Center)
 - c. College Curriculum Committee
 - d. Academic Dean

The proposal and signature page completed to this point should be emailed to Dr. Amy Guerette in the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement. FDA will review and obtain the following signature:

- e. Director of Institutional Performance and Assessment
 - f. Institutional Accreditation Liaison
 - g. Dean of The Graduate School or Undergraduate Policy Committee
 - h. Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement for final approval
2. Following approval, the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement notifies the following offices and individuals that the certificate program is in effect:
 - a. Provost
 - b. Registrar
 - c. Department
 - d. Academic Dean
 - e. Dean of The Graduate School or Dean of Undergraduate Studies
 - f. Director of Institutional Performance and Assessment
 - g. Institutional Accreditation Liaison
 - h. Budget and Analysis
 3. Once a certificate program is approved, either The Graduate School or the Office of Undergraduate Studies will contact the unit in order to include information about

the new program on their website. The program should also be included in the unit's *General Bulletin or Graduate Bulletin* copy. Upon approval of a new certificate, Plan Codes will be developed and implemented by the Registrar's Office for use in Student Central.

4. All units must follow the curriculum that is approved in the certificate proposal which illustrates the specific required core and elective courses that can be counted, although course substitutions may be made for individual students in unusual circumstances. Substantive changes to an approved certificate program may be modified by following the same approval sequence as the original proposal.
5. Units should contact the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement through the Associate Vice President if they wish to terminate a certificate program. Termination of certificate programs with student enrollment will require a teach-out approved by the Provost's Office and SACSCOC.



**Appendix A:
Certificate**

Management Memorandum of Understanding

Through the approval of this Certificate Proposal, the Department (if applicable) and College take responsibility for the following activities associated with systematic and ongoing management of the certificate program.

College: Social Science and Public Policy

Certificate Name & Level: Global Sustainability – Undergraduate

Date: April 1, 2025

| Action Item | Faculty or Staff Position Responsible Name and Title |
|--|---|
| Ensure the certificate program operates in compliance with FSU Policy 3A-1 . This includes ensuring the certificate program is only offered at locations and modalities listed in the proposal approved by the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement and our institutional accreditor. | <i>COSSPP Office of Academic Affairs</i> |
| Designate a certificate program coordinator and report any changes to the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement. | <i>Departmental Chair</i> |
| Every term, send list of admitted students to the Registrar’s Office prior to the completion of the second course in the certificate program. Lists must be submitted by the last day of classes in the given semester. | <i>Certificate Program Coordinator or Undergraduate Coordinator and COSSPP Office of Academic Affairs</i> |
| Every term, send list of completed students to the Registrar’s Office upon completion of coursework within 2 weeks of grades posting for the given semester. | <i>COSSPP Office of Academic Affairs</i> |
| Annually, assess and report results for Program and Student Learning Outcomes in the Institutional Effectiveness Portal. | <i>Certificate Program Coordinator and Undergraduate Coordinator</i> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Marketing of certificate to prospective students and keeping website information current.</p> | <p><i>Certificate Program Coordinator, Undergraduate Coordinator, and COSSPP Office of Academic Affairs</i></p> |
| <p>Enrollment Management, including monitoring the number of students applying to, taking course work in, and completing the certificate program.</p> | <p><i>COSSPP Office of Academic Affairs</i></p> |
| <p>Annually evaluation of the need to continue offering the certificate based on enrollments and resources.</p> | <p><i>Geography Teaching & Curriculum Committee</i></p> |
| <p>Curriculum Management, including regular review by the program faculty and notification of any curricular changes to the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement.</p> | <p><i>Geography Teaching & Curriculum Committee</i></p> |
| <p>Ensure that faculty teaching certificate program courses have the required degree or appropriate justification in compliance with FSU Policy 3A-2.</p> | <p><i>Certificate Program Coordinator and Undergraduate Coordinator</i></p> |

**Appendix B:
Proposed Certificate Outcomes, Assessment Plans, and Numeric Targets**

| | |
|---|--|
| Please complete this template by filling in the text fields. All certificate programs are required to select at least 1 Program Outcome and at least 2 Student Learning Outcomes. | |
| Program Outcome | |
| PO Name | PO – Certificate Program Enrollment |
| PO Statement | The program will increase the numbers of students enrolled in the Global Sustainability Certificate. |
| Assessment Plan | Enrollment data are aggregated per academic year, defined as Summer C, Fall, and Spring. Each semester, enrollment data will be gathered from the “Student Academic Plan Summary” dashboard in the FSU Oracle Business Intelligence platform by the COSSPP Academic Affairs Office. The program director has responsibility for reporting enrollment data. |
| Numeric Target | Our enrollment targets are listed below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Year 1 (Fall 2026 and Spring 2027): at least 15 students ● Year 2 (Summer 2027, Fall 2027, Spring 2028): at least 30 students ● Year 3 (Summer 2028, Fall 2028, Spring 2029): at least 50 students ● Year 4 (Summer 2029, Fall 2029, Spring 2030): at least 75 students ● Year 5 (Summer 2030, Fall 2030, Spring 2031): at least 100 students |
| Student Learning Outcome #1 | |
| SLO Name | SLO – Sustainability Methods |
| SLO Statement | Upon completion of the course of instruction, students will characterize the methods and practices used in sustainability approaches. |
| Assessment Plan | We will assess this outcome by testing students in all sections of IDS 2227 (Sustainable Society) offered every Fall and Spring. To assess this learning outcome, we will use a Final Exam created by the program faculty. At least 20 questions will be used to assess students’ knowledge of sustainability methods and approaches. |
| Numeric Target | By the end of the Sustainable Society course (IDS 2227), at least 80 percent of students enrolled in the certificate program will achieve mastery of the SLO by correctly answering at least 16 out of the 20 (80%) final exam questions testing this learning outcome. |
| Student Learning Outcome #2 | |
| SLO Name | SLO – Selection, Evaluation and Synthesis of Sustainability Practice |

| | |
|--|---|
| SLO Statement | Upon completion of the course of instruction, students will design, conduct, and interpret basic sustainability research. |
| Assessment Plan | We will assess this outcome by testing students in all sections of GEO 4503 (Globalization) offered in Fall and Spring. To assess this learning outcome, we will use a course project created by the program faculty. Although this project will be submitted in stages, only the final submission will be used to assess mastery. The final project submission will be graded using a rubric assessing 4 main areas – format, methods, content, and sources. |
| Numeric Target | By the end of GEO 4503 Globalization, at least 80 percent of students enrolled in the certificate program will achieve mastery of the SLO by achieving at least 80% on 3 areas of the project rubric – methods, content, and sources. |
| Student Learning Outcome #3 (if applicable) | |
| SLO Name | n/a |
| SLO Statement | n/a |
| Assessment Plan | n/a |
| Numeric Target | n/a |

Appendix C: Sample Certificate



Florida State University
College of Social Science and Public Policy
Department of
Geography

Attests that

I. Earnest Student

*Having successfully completed the requirements
Is hereby recognized for completing a Certificate in*

Global Sustainability

This ____ day of _____, 20XX

Dean, College of Social Science and Public Policy

Coordinator, Global Sustainability Certificate Program