



**RICHMOND**  
School of Professional  
& Continuing Studies

# Impact Academy Brochure

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## About UR Impact Academy

The UR Impact Academy empowers participants to succeed in a range of sustainable development fields through our career-acceleration programs.

Over 80% of sustainable development employers say that experience is the main quality lacking in candidates. They know that contextual factors can make or break impact-driven projects. Without experience managing these, employees cannot dependably deliver results.

Our programs are designed to address this need. Through online study, participants learn how to identify contextual factors and then use specific toolkits to analyze real-world projects. This gives them the skills, knowledge and experience needed to get hired by purpose-driven organizations and succeed in their roles.

## Careers in sustainable development

Sustainable development career paths aren't always clear. UR Impact Academy helps guide participants to the career path most suited to them. We also provide access to a jobs portal that aggregates thousands of sustainable development vacancies from around the world. To guide them through the process, participants can rely on one of our experienced career counselors.

Competition for sustainable development roles can also be tough, but our alumni have an advantage. This program includes 11 different contextualizing experiences: five masterclasses on relevant subjects delivered by local experts, five visits to five different local organizations, and one final in-depth contextual analysis of a specific local project. Participants are able to add these experiences to their LinkedIn profile or resume. This demonstrates to prospective employers that they have the contextual understanding necessary to successfully manage purpose-driven projects.



# Subject areas



Empower yourself for a career that engages with the climate crisis.

- Analyze key issues such as:
- transportation and greenhouse gas emissions
  - solar, wind and hydropower
  - off-grid renewable energy solutions
  - the use of low carbon building materials.



Increase your potential to develop your career in global education.

- Analyze key issues such as:
- early childhood development (ECD)
  - teacher development and education in rural communities
  - approaches for increasing literacy and numeracy
  - gender equality in education.



Gain the understanding needed to succeed in an impactful career in sustainability.

- Analyze key issues such as:
- water scarcity and food security
  - urbanization and the environment
  - transportation and air pollution
  - waste management and recycling.



Gain insight into the practical realities of working to advance healthcare, and learn to deliver successful healthcare programs on the ground.

- Analyze key issues such as:
- mother and child health (MCH) and nutrition
  - water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)
  - noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and infectious diseases
  - mental health.



From human rights to gender equality to sociology, learn to apply development theories on the ground. Gain the experience needed to advance peace and justice globally.

- Analyze key issues such as:
- economic, social and cultural rights
  - civil and political rights
  - indigenous rights
  - women's, children's and disability rights.



Gain the skills to kick-start your career in marine conservation and deepen your understanding of ocean preservation.

- Analyze key issues such as:
- sustainably managing local fisheries and marine protected areas (MPAs)
  - endangered marine species
  - the climate crisis and coral bleaching
  - marine plastic pollution and strategic solutions.



Explore different approaches used across the world to stimulate local economic activity.

- Analyze key issues such as:
- inclusive business
  - entrepreneurship development
  - employment, training and skills development
  - local infrastructure and technology
  - access to financial capital.



Learn from experts in wildlife conservation and gain insight into what makes wildlife conservation efforts successful in context.

- Analyze key issues such as:
- habitat destruction, pollution and the climate crisis
  - poaching and endangered species
  - managing protected areas
  - conservation and community development.

# Fieldwork locations

## United States



One of the largest countries in the world, the United States has nearly 60 national parks and has the world's largest economy. Impact Academy participants will stay in the Greater Los Angeles area.

## Costa Rica



Learn about sustainable development in a country world-renowned for their successful environmental policies. You will be stationed in the centrally-located capital of San Jose.

## Peru



An environmentally and geographically diverse country, Peru features a low-lying desert coastline, a portion of the Amazon rainforest and the Andean peaks and valleys. Bases are located in the capital in Lima and Cusco, close to the site of Machu Picchu.

## Ghana



Since Ghana's independence in 1957, the government has been investing heavily in sustainable development. Learn from local experts while stationed in the country's cosmopolitan capital of Accra.

## South Africa



Gain a contextual understanding of sustainable development in the third-most biodiverse country in the world, with one of the most progressive constitutions. Participants stay in Cape Town, the urban center closest to Africa's southernmost point.

## Thailand



Known for its white-sand beaches, Thailand is one of the most-visited countries in the world. Immerse yourself in the conservation challenges and developmental intricacies of this country while stationed in the northern city of Chiang Mai.

## Fiji



Fiji has over 1500 species of marine animals that attract numerous international visitors every year. Gain an understanding of how the context of Fiji affects sustainable development work in this island nation. You will be stationed in the capital of Suva, on Fiji's island of Viti Levu.

- Climate Crisis and Clean Energy
- Education for Development
- Environmental and Corporate Sustainability
- Global Public Health
- Human Rights and Access to Justice
- Marine Conservation
- Social Economic Development
- Wildlife Conservation

# Breakdown of the learning experience

## Structure

The recommended structure of the program includes an online component of 8 weeks and a fieldwork portion of 4 weeks. An intensive version of the online portion can be completed within 2 weeks or an extended version of 16 weeks can be undertaken. The fieldwork portion can also be completed within a 2 week period.

For the best participant experience, we recommend you select the below structure. Please speak to us for more information on alternative options.

	Online	Fieldwork
Description	Engage with a range of relevant theoretical materials online, including an analysis of subject-specific issues and a contextual analysis framework.	Analyze how local context affects development work by observing local projects and hearing from local experts. Complete one in-depth final research project.
Format	Part-time and self-paced, flexible to fit your schedule.	Full-time.
Duration	2, 8 or 16 weeks	2 or 4 weeks
Learning hours	80 hours	160 hours



# Online courses curriculum

Through online study learn the sustainable development theory that will help you to analyze the contextual factors that affect project delivery on the ground. Our online courses integrate video lectures and interviews, as well as self-assessments and project assignments. There are also opportunities for collaborative learning through discussion forums and webinars.

## How you will advance

The following courses contribute to your learning journey prior to the fieldwork portion of your program.

## Online courses

**Course 1 | Context Analysis and Practice**

This course introduces a practical toolkit that helps you analyze the contexts of different regions. Core to the curriculum, the toolkit helps you develop an inquiry-based, analytical and reflective approach.

**Course 2 | Subject area foundations**

Gain a big-picture overview of the fundamentals of sustainable development and your subject area. You will understand key concepts, industry dynamics and deepen your knowledge of the global issues.

**Course 3 | Community Engagement**

This course introduces the principles of community engagement. You will learn the different processes, engagement levels and techniques to formulate effective community engagement strategies and programs.

**Course 4 | Strategy, Monitoring and Evaluation**

In this course, you will learn practical ways to analyze and design strategies that create a positive impact. Frameworks and toolkits help you develop results-based frameworks to measure impact.

**Course 5 | Communication and Advocacy**

This course gives you a holistic overview of the positives and negatives of communication. You will learn how to identify target audiences or partners, develop compelling messaging and select appropriate communication methods.

**Course 6 | Project Management and Delivery**

The principles of project management and delivery are introduced in this course. You will learn how to apply project management concepts and tools appropriately and formulate effective project management processes and plans.

**Course 7 | Finance and Fundraising**

Dive deep into finance for sustainable development and the different financing mechanisms. You will learn key concepts and frameworks that even beginners to finance can use to navigate the fundraising process.

**Course 8 | Best Practices and Innovation**

Study cutting edge insights from the latest practices and approaches in sustainable development that demonstrate best practice and innovation. You will develop a deeper understanding of the latest global approaches to development.

# Fieldwork

Gain practical experience in global development through an intensive fieldwork program. Attend a series of masterclasses, conduct analyses of real-world projects, and complete a final project analyzing one organization.

## How you will advance





The following activities contribute to your learning journey during the international fieldwork portion of your program.



### Masterclasses

Learn from experts in a series of curated masterclasses. In these masterclasses, you'll be exposed to a broad range of perspectives, as practitioners and beneficiaries share knowledge and insight from their specific fields. You'll get to hear specific examples of global development theory in action, and engage deeper with the content you've been exploring online.

#### Examples of masterclasses:

-  The head of disaster management at a Thai NGO delivers a masterclass entitled "The impact of climate change on local Thai communities."
-  The former South African governmental head of educational policy delivers a masterclass entitled "The South African education system: challenges and opportunities."
-  A Fiji conservationist delivers a masterclass entitled "Plastic pollution: local views and behaviors."
-  A Peruvian social enterprise co-founder delivers a masterclass entitled "The community sharing economic model."









Site visits

You'll conduct site visits to ensure you get hands-on experience in the subject area you've chosen. This is where you'll gain an understanding of how contextual factors impact sustainable development practices. Your research will be exploratory, as you focus on observation and freely exchanging information.





Examples of site visits:

-  Visit a local market in Costa Rica and observe informal traders and microenterprises. Interview traders and customers.
-  Travel to a small local fishing harbor in Ghana. Analyze the physical environment and stakeholders.
-  Go to a local school in Costa Rica and observe the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructures in place and the behaviors of students.
-  Visit projects run by a local Ghanaian NGO sports program for kids. Hear their views on education, their challenges and their goals.

Final project

Apply all your learnings to a final project, focusing on one specific local organization. You'll conduct an evidence-based situational analysis of the organization and apply relevant theories, frameworks and methodologies.

Examples of final projects:

-  Investigate how Costa Rica works with the United Nations to bring solar panels to rural communities.
-  Investigate the barriers experienced by a healthcare nonprofit in Peru when looking to expand their project of mobile wellness clinics for primary schools.
-  Analyze how a Costa Rican business can address gender-based violence for their employees.
-  Analyze the work done in Thailand by the traditional elephant-keeping community in partnership with international funders to change their economic model from elephant tourism to ecotourism.





# Impact

The UR Impact Academy is powered by GVI, an experiential education organization focusing on the sustainable development sector that has been in operation for over 20 years.

Guided by the 17 Global Goals of the United Nations, GVI's projects seek to address the greatest challenges in development today. The goals of all their projects are also aligned with the objectives of local partner organizations. This is in keeping with best practices in sustainable development for creating local capacity to solve local problems.

The robust partnerships that GVI has worked to establish over the years allow participants on a UR Impact Academy program to gain insight into how context and engagement with local communities affects development outcomes.

# Health and safety

UR Impact Academy strives to meet best practices in participant safety. We employ long-term, experienced, suitably qualified and trained staff who manage risk dynamically.

They also adhere to the practices outlined in the Impact Academy Health and Safety Policies and Procedures.

We have Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) and crisis management plans in place for all possible major incidents.

All locations and activities are risk-assessed, and dynamic risk is monitored daily. Our operations are also internally audited, reviewed and evaluated on a quarterly basis.

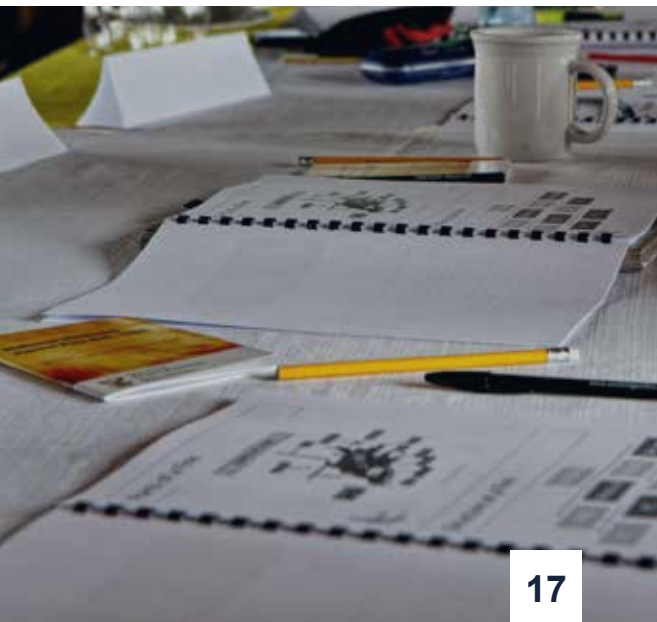
Our 24-hour emergency support desk allows our staff, participants and their guardians to access professional support at any time.

# Fieldwork staff

- Staff to participant ratios are at a minimum of one to eight, depending on the activities conducted.
- All staff have extensive training, experience and, where required by local law, qualifications to conduct activities.
- All staff have valid first aid certifications.
- All staff have up to date criminal background checks.
- All staff are trained in our Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.
- Staff have completed off-site safety management, as applicable.
- All staff are trained in local risk assessments, and the implementation of Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) and crisis management plans.
- Staff are trained in participant management, as applicable.

# Risk management

- We provide a 24-hour emergency desk to respond to incidents and emergencies, run by staff with training and expertise in risk management.
- All locations and activities are risk-assessed in line with the objective of the program through dynamic and periodic reviews.
- EAPs are in place for foreseeable emergencies at each location.
- Crisis management plans are in place at each location.
- All locations, no matter how remote, have a medical and crisis evacuation plan in place.
- We monitor United States Department of State travel and safety advice for travel warnings. If a warning is valid for the area and time of activities, insurance is notified and verified for valid conditions. Participants and their guardians are notified and encouraged to read the warning.





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## Contact details

Speak to us.

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