Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

MA in International Retail Business, Sustainability and Technologies

Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:
University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)
Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London
Final Award: MA in International Retail Business, Sustainability and Technologies
Programme Name: MA International Retail Business, Sustainability and Technologies
Total credit value for programme: 180
Name of Interim Exit Award(s):
Postgraduate Certificate in International Retail Business, Sustainability and Technologies
Postgraduate Diploma in International Retail Business, Sustainability and Technologies
Duration of Programme: 1 year full-time, 2 years part-time
UCAS Code(s):
HECoS Code(s): (100078) Business and Management (70%) (100092) Retail Management (20%) (100738) E-Business (10%)
QAA Benchmark Group
FHEQ Level of Award: Level 7
Programme accredited by: Not applicable
Date Programme Specification last updated/approved: March 2026
Home School: Creative Management
Schools(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:
Computing, , MCCS,

Programme overview

The MA programme in International Retail Business, Sustainability and Technologies at Goldsmiths seeks to combine retail business/management studies with a deep exploration of sustainability principles and practice, technological solutions to contemporary challenges, and building the requisite skills of leadership to drive these solutions forward. The new Master's programme differs from conventional retail management courses which exclusively or predominantly focus on the narrow 'management' aspects of retail business. Instead, we adopt a multi-disciplinary approach that offers students exposure to a diverse range of contemporary issues and provides knowledge and professional skills in cutting-edge solutions based on three core areas of expertise (established and new), which are

International Retail Business, Sustainability and Leadership, as well as Retail Data and Technology.

The last two decades have seen the retail industry and the socio-cultural context within which it is placed encounter unprecedented challenges which require an array of changes in approach, philosophy and practice. Among the more important of these are the environmental pressures associated with the retail sector, linked to the ecological footprint of the products it sells, the space, resources and energy it devours, the waste it generates, and the pressures associated with consumerism in general. To this must be added the existential challenges faced by a retail sector struggling to navigate the rapidly shifting sands of globalisation, oscillating consumer preferences, changing demographics, the proliferation of social media, the burgeoning of online retail platforms and seismic shifts such as caused by the coronavirus crisis. The retail industry faces an historical watershed as it responds to simultaneous demands for stability, adaptability, relevance, sustainability, social responsibility, inventiveness, technological innovation as well as financial viability.

Since the term ‘retail’ includes all retailing sectors (e.g. automobiles, groceries, electronics, fashion; fast/slow; mass/niche; global/local), the Master’s programme examines ‘retail’ not as a sole business subject, but as a multi-disciplinary integrated study field permeating myriad areas of social-cultural and economic life. The programme also aims to challenge Eurocentric frameworks for understanding global retail business, with a strong emphasis on contextualisation and the incorporation of localised perspectives and frameworks.

As one of the most highly globalised industries at a time of significant global change, the retail sector has an urgent need for personnel (new recruits and middle-level managers) who not only understand core business principles and practices but also have the requisite mindset to engage with the social and cultural contexts within which their businesses operate. The proposed MA does not replace a conventional business studies approach, it builds upon and enhances this in a way that recognises both the increasing porosity of disciplinary boundaries and the growing diversity of operational contexts. Thus, students will be equipped with business management fundamentals in both theory and practice, but will at the same time be exposed to relevant knowledge and critical understanding from other, cognate disciplinary fields, set within a variety of economic, social and cultural contexts that more closely reflect the true business world. Students who take this degree will therefore be equipped with a much broader understanding of the retail business and why certain business decisions should or should not be made. These are the essential critical thinking mindset, as well as analytical and practical skills that will make our students extremely marketable in the retail world of the immediate future.

Programme entry requirements

The new MA programme will open the door to students from all walks of life without specific academic disciplinary requirements. It thereby creates more opportunities for students to access knowledge on international retail business, and prepare them with a mind-set to enter or enhance their position within the retail industry.

Applicants should have (or expect to be awarded) an undergraduate degree of at least lower second class (2.2) standard. However, consideration may also be given to students without an academic qualification as outlined above, if they have professional experience in relevant areas or are able to demonstrate their capability and commitment to the pursuit of a programme of rigorous academic study.

Non-native speakers of English will need to meet our English language requirements to study with us. For this programme we require: IELTS 6.5 (with a minimum of 6.5 in the written test and no individual test lower than 6.0).

Programme learning outcomes

This programme aims to:

- equip students with a critical thinking mindset and fundamental knowledge and skills to work in the international retail goods and service sectors.
- provide students with the professional and practical skills to allow them to be able to analyse data, process complex information and develop means of representing data, and to provide feasible solutions to retail industry challenges.
- develop an in-depth understanding and awareness of debates concerning sustainability principles and the approaches used in the retail service, system, product, and in circular design, to engage critically with relevant data of sustainability reporting within internationally recognised and accepted academic and practical frameworks.
- develop research skills needed to interrogate a practically encountered retail business problem underpinned by theories, concepts and investigative frameworks as well as critical analysis.
- provide students with a potential foundation to embark on further study (e.g. Ph.D.) in their chosen research area.

What you will be expected to achieve

You will develop a body of knowledge, and a set of cognitive skills enabling you to explain and critically analyse contemporary debates on international retail business and associated issues in sustainability and technology. Students are required to develop skills that will enable them to contribute to this body of knowledge, but which will also be of use in a

broader range of professional contexts, particularly related to diversity, equality and social justice.

Students who exit the programme successfully at the **Postgraduate Certificate** stage will be able to demonstrate a professional knowledge and skills base as outlined in the following learning outcomes.

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Demonstrate a professional understanding of international retailing, and the key strategies and accomplishments of leading professionals, practitioners, and organisations.	International Retail Management
A2	Demonstrate a professional understanding of the background, policies and frameworks that outline key concepts and challenges related to sustainability.	Sustainability Thinking & Leadership: Consumption & Development
A3	Explain and evaluate the customer-facing and back-end technology platforms used in contemporary retail	Retail Data and Technology

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Understand and critically evaluate the different strategies and approaches that are used for different types of retail goods and services globally.	International Retail Management
B2	Identify and evaluate different governmental policies, regulations, and agendas within more than one cultural context or geographical location and use them to present a specific business case.	International Retail Management Sustainability Thinking & Leadership: Consumption & Development
B3	Explain and evaluate the data that can be collected in retail settings	Retail Data and Technology

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Comprehend the key factors and metrics of a globally interconnected retail system and the implications for social justice and equality.	International Retail Management
C2	Effectively and professionally utilise the frameworks and policies related to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainable practices and adapt and present them to reflect a given location or industry or culture.	Sustainability Thinking & Leadership: Consumption & Development
C3	Critically evaluate the ethical, societal and environmental implications of data driven retail technology.	Retail Data and Technology

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Identify and analyse theoretical and practice-based approaches that apply to the development of retail management, and be familiar with current technological developments and trends.	International Retail Management
D2	Design and evaluate technology-driven customer experiences for retail.	Retail Data and Technology
D3	Analyse retail data and apply insights to propose business decisions and evaluate proposals.	Retail Data and Technology
D4	Understand the respective approaches and underlying rationale of CSR and sustainability reporting by both policy-makers and commercial business leaders.	Sustainability Thinking & Leadership: Consumption & Development

In addition to the learning outcomes above, students who exit the programme successfully at the **Postgraduate Diploma** stage will be able to demonstrate a fully developed professional knowledge and skills base as outlined in the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Understand different markets, industry segments and consumers' social-cultural values.	Optional modules offered by ICCE, IMS and MCCS
A2	Understand the elements of technology and digital culture that cause social and cultural impacts and changes.	Optional modules on Social Media offered by ICCE, IMS, Computing and MCCS
A3	Critically assess and evaluate a wide range of cogent concepts, ideas, and data that pertain to retail management.	All optional modules.

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Develop a critical understanding of the established theories, principles and concepts, as well as the advanced and emerging issues at the forefront of retail organisations and consumer markets.	Optional modules by IMS
B2	Be able to identify appropriate data sources, acquire and analyse data to explore the uncertainties and unknowns within, and address the challenges facing, retail markets, products, firms and industry.	Optional modules by Computing and IMS
B3	Be able to analyse markets, risk and appropriate routes to market for a creative idea.	Optional modules offered by ICCE

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Systematically identify and address the student's own learning needs both in current and in new areas, making use of research, development and professional materials as appropriate.	All optional modules
C2	Demonstrate originality and creativity in formulating, evaluating and applying evidence-based solutions and arguments.	All optional modules
C3		

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Within a given context, be able to apply subject-related knowledge and skills to communicate complex problems and issues, and undertake research for investigation and to seek solutions.	All optional modules
D2	Be able to summarise and present arguments and to defend them in critical discussions.	All optional modules
D3		

Students who successfully complete the **MA Programme** in International Retail Management: Sustainability and Technology will be able to demonstrate:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	As above shown in Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate	As above shown in Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate
A2	Demonstrate an understanding of how to conduct a critical review of the literature/existing body of knowledge and undertake an original analysis of documentary and/or other evidence on a chosen topic within the fields of retail business, technology and sustainability.	Dissertation
A3		

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	As above shown in Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate	As above shown in Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate
B2	Utilise conceptual and contextual knowledge and synthesise different perspectives using critical reasoning skills in complex problem-solving management situations, delivering a deep and insightful understanding of the issues and challenges associated with the retail environment.	Dissertation
B3	Design, develop, execute and write up a research project using primary and/or secondary materials appropriate to the topic and according to the necessary conventions of scholarly work.	Dissertation
B4	Acquire the motivation and capacity for self-directed learning, under supervision, and demonstrate competence in critical analysis and sustained persuasive argument.	Dissertation

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	As above shown in Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate	As above shown in Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate
C2	Understand how to recognise and integrate ethical considerations relating to research and the wider context of retail business, and to reflect on the student's positionality in relation to the subject and subjects of their research.	Dissertation

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	As above shown in Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate	As above shown in Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate
D2	Adopt a holistic, joined-up and multi-disciplinary view, and critically, independently and creatively investigate complex issues relating to retail, technology and sustainability.	Dissertation
D3	Critically, systematically and incrementally integrate knowledge and utilise appropriate research methods to conduct an original investigation which contributes to a deep understanding of technology and sustainability issues within retail management.	Dissertation

Mode of study

Full-time students take the programme over one calendar year. Part-time students take the programme over two calendar years. Formal teaching takes place in the autumn term (eleven weeks) and spring term (eleven weeks). The summer term is designed mainly for revision, assessment, and for intensive dissertation preparation.

Grading criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Outstanding/ Exceptional)	A mark of 80% or higher is awarded when a candidate satisfies the requirements for a Distinction, but to an outstanding degree. Such work may be of publishable quality, and will be a significant contribution to debate within the field.
70-79%	Distinction	A mark of 70-79% (Distinction) is awarded when the candidate demonstrates the very effective application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the learning outcomes of the course. The outstanding work will show evidence of extensive relevant reading and an impressive grasp of current major issues in the field. This knowledge will have been reviewed critically with insight and independence of thought. Arguments and the presentation of evidence will demonstrate sophisticated reasoning, with clear awareness of

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
		issues of methodology and evidence, and be particularly clear, well-focused and cogent.
60-69%	Merit	A mark of 60-69% (Merit) is awarded when candidates demonstrate the effective application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the course learning outcomes. The candidate will show consistency and fluency in discussing and evaluating evidence and theories drawn from a wide range of sources. They will demonstrate an ability to relate this reading to their topic, and will clearly have understood and assimilated the relevant literature.
50-59%	Pass	A mark of 50- 59% (Pass) is awarded when the candidate demonstrates the satisfactory application of appropriate knowledge, understandings and skills specified in the learning outcomes of the course. There is clear evidence of knowledge and understanding, but limited development of ideas, critical comment or methodology. Within these limitations there will be indication that the candidate has grasped fundamental concepts and procedures in the field.
30-49%	Fail	A mark of 30-49% indicates that a candidate has demonstrated an unsatisfactory application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified for the module or course.
10-29%	Bad fail	A mark of 10-29% is awarded when the assessed work demonstrates a significant overall failure to achieve the learning outcomes, and where there is no evidence of recognition of the question or of how it might be responded to.
1-9%	Very bad fail	A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified learning outcomes.
0%	Non submission or plagiarised	A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit an assessment or a mark assigned for a plagiarized assessment.

Programme structure

The programme consists of the following compulsory modules:

- International Retail Management (30 credits)
- Sustainability Thinking & Leadership: Consumption & Development (30 credits)
- Retail Data and Technology (15 credits)
- Dissertation (60 credits)

Students are required to take 45 credits worth of option modules, which can be taken from those on offer (depending on availability each year) from the Schools of Creative Management , Computing and MCCS. Indicative options are as follows:

- IM71007B Consumer Behaviour
- IM71015A CREATING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES
- IM71047A Digital Marketing and Branding
- IS71055B CRITICAL SOCIAL MEDIA PRACTICES
- IC71101A CULTURE, TOURISM AND REGENERATION
- IC71153C Entrepreneurial Modelling: From Idea to Articulation
- IM71033B Marketing Strategy
- MC71190C SOCIAL MEDIA IN EVERYDAY LIFE: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE
- IM71051B Technological Innovation & Market Creation

Full-time mode

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
International Retail Management	IC71155A	30	7	Compulsory	1
Sustainability Thinking & Leadership: Consumption & Development	IC71156B	30	7	Compulsory	1 & 2
Retail Data and Technology	IS71109A	15	7	Compulsory	2
Dissertation	IC71157A	60	7	Compulsory	2 & 3
Optional Modules	Various	45	7	Optional	1, 2 & 3

Part-time mode

Part-time students take the programme over two calendar years. In order to complete their first year, part-time students need to successfully complete all compulsory modules with a total of 75 credits. Students will take the remaining module credits in the second year and complete their Dissertation at the end of that academic year.

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term	Year
International Retail Management	IC71155A	30	7	Compulsory	1	1
Sustainability Thinking & Leadership: Consumption & Development	IC71156B	30	7	Compulsory	1 & 2	1

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term	Year
Retail Data and Technology	IS71109A	15	7	Compulsory	2	1
Dissertation	IC71157A	60	7	Compulsory	2 & 3	2
Optional Modules	Various	45	7	Optional	1, 2 & 3	1 or/and 2

Academic support

Support for learning and wellbeing is provided in a number of ways by departments and College support services who work collaboratively to ensure students get the right help to reach their best potential both academically and personally.

All students are allocated a Personal Tutor (one in each department for joint programmes) who has overall responsibility for their individual progress and welfare. Personal Tutors meet with their student at least three a year either face-to-face, as part of a group and/or electronically. The first meeting normally takes place within the first few weeks of the autumn term. Personal Tutors are also available to students throughout the year of study. These meetings aim to discuss progress on modules, discussion of the academic discipline and reports from previous years if available (for continuing students). This provides an opportunity for progress, attendance and assessment marks to be reviewed and an informed discussion to take place about how to strengthen individual learning and success.

All students are also allocated a Senior Tutor to enable them to speak to an experienced academic member of staff about any issues which are negatively impacting their academic study and which are beyond the normal scope of issues handled by Programme Convenors and Personal Tutors.

Students are provided with information about learning resources, the Library and information available on Learn.gold (VLE) so that they have access to department/ programme handbooks, programme information and support related information and guidance.

Taught sessions and lectures provide overviews of themes, which students are encouraged to complement with intensive reading for presentation and discussion with peers at seminars. Assessments build on lectures and seminars so students are expected to attend all taught sessions to build knowledge and their own understanding of their chosen discipline.

All assessed work is accompanied by some form of feedback to ensure that students' work is on the right track. It may come in a variety of forms ranging from written comments on a marked essay to oral and written feedback on developing projects and practice as they attend workshops.

Students may be referred to specialist student services by department staff or they may access support services independently. Information about support services is provided on the Goldsmiths website and for new students through new starter information and induction/Welcome Week. Any support recommendations that are made are agreed with the student and communicated to the department so that adjustments to learning and teaching are able to be implemented at a department level and students can be reassured that arrangements are in place. Opportunities are provided for students to review their support arrangements should their circumstances change. The Disability and Wellbeing Services maintain caseloads of students and provide on-going support.

The Careers Service provides central support for skills enhancement, running The Gold Award scheme and other co-curricular activities that are accredited via the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

The Centre for Academic Language and Literacies works with academic departments offering bespoke academic literacy sessions. It also provides a programme of academic skills workshops and one-to-one provision for students throughout the year

Placement opportunities

The programme doesn't require students to conduct a compulsory work placement in order to complete their degree. However, the programme has the potential to help our students build up their professional network and expand their future career opportunities through our extensive links with employers and international industrial practitioners. Please refer to the section below.

Employability and potential career opportunities

Designed to run alongside the compulsory modules, there will be a series of industry talks involving practitioners who work in various retail sectors. The talks – mostly given by practitioners from global retail industry – will provide real-life illustrations of the issues tackled on the degree, as well give students practical advice about working in these industries. These industry contributors will be drawn from the extensive list of contacts of staff in the department as a whole (which has excellent links to industry). Using ICCE's external network arrangements can be made for voluntary placements. For instance,

students on the new MA will have the opportunity to access the professional networks that the MA LBM has built in the last four years.

We also support our students to conduct in-depth investigations into the areas/subjects/issues they are interested in or troubled by, seeking and finding optimal solutions. Students will learn from both academics and industry practitioners (e.g. guest talks/voluntary internships or jobs/study projects) to refine their mind-set and enhance their professional agility.

More broadly, students on this degree will develop their skills in critical thinking, teamwork, presentation and implementation. These are transferable skills that are desirable across the public, private and third sectors.

Programme-specific requirements

Not Applicable.

Tuition fee costs

Information on tuition fee costs is available at: https://www.gold.ac.uk/students/fee-support/

Specific programme costs

Not Applicable.