

Oxford Adaptation Academy - Building a Business Case

We are delighted that you would like to join the Oxford Adaptation Academy. We understand that you may need to make a case to your employer for support in terms of funding and/or time to attend our training; this guide has been written to help you with that process.

About the Academy

The Oxford Adaptation Academy is now in its 6th year and is run in partnership with the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment within the University of Oxford. It is an intensive 3 week course covering a wide ranging curriculum of climate change adaptation.

The 2015 Adaptation Academy will run from Monday 10th - Friday 28th August, with a drinks reception on Sunday 9th August.

Once again, the Academy will be hosted in the Oxford University Centre for the Environment (OUCE) within the University's science area. The department is adjacent to the University Park and in the historic city of Oxford, allowing you to immerse yourself in learning.

Who is the Academy for?

The course is designed for experienced practitioners who want to find adaptation solutions for some of the most profound challenges ever to face the world, integrating climate adaptation in their work. We also welcome participants who are interested in changing their career path to work in adaptation.

Each year, the Academy brings together a multi-disciplinary but like-minded group from different sectors, maximising diversity. Organizations sending participants include:

- UN Agencies: UNFCCC, UNEP and UNDP
- Finance: IDB, AFDB, ADB,
- NGOs: Practical Action Nepal
- Government: Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam
- Others, self-funding, as part of career development

What training will you receive?

The Academy integrates learning themes on:

- Participants' role as change makers, in their own careers and organisations
- Adaptation as a process linking climate science, vulnerability and decision making
- Technical skills in analysing adaptation options and project development

Through continual refinement of our curriculum and varied training methods, we have developed an extensive three week programme built around you. Each year the content is altered to reflect the needs and interests of the participants, but is likely to:

- Explore the framing of climate change and concepts of risk, vulnerability and adaptation;
- Assess vulnerability and impacts, with experience from disaster risk reduction;
- Analyse climate data for change and variability trends and extreme events;
- Assess confidence and uncertainty in climate change scenarios;
- Develop personal leadership skills and an understanding of organisational change;
- Create a project level Theory of Change integrating a continuum of adaptation from good development to transformation;

- Work with practical approaches to communicating climate risks and adaptation opportunities;
- Map socio-institutional networks, information flows and needs;
- Define national, sectoral, urban and local strategies and measures;
- Assess the economics of adaptation and adaptation finance;
- Screen adaptation options to develop sound projects;
- Explore innovative approaches for resilience in the private sector.

What will you get out of the Academy?

Attending the Academy includes many benefits to you and your company. It is important that you tailor the benefits that you receive to your organisation; they will want to know how your personal development will affect them in the long run. Benefits of the Academy include:

- Deeper understanding of adaptation challenges, climate change economics and theory of change and how to make sense of risks and opportunities for the future
- Ability to handle complex issues related to climate change and apply decision making frameworks for a more practical design resolution
- Capacity for climate adaptation champions, leaders and agents of change to transform organizational culture to tackle resilience
- Develop leadership skills with an increased understanding of climate adaptation and decision making
- Innovative insights into new business models and opportunities associated with climate adaptation, finance and sustainability
- Enhanced credibility with employees, communities and other stakeholders
- Joining the leading global network of experts as Alumni of the Adaptation Academy which now reaches 35 countries
- A certificate from the University of Oxford's Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, and GCAP

Who to approach?

First of all you need to be aware of who will be making the decision regarding funding and your time off work. These can vary from each organisation to the next, and could include more than one decision maker, from your line manager, head of department, somebody outside your department/team or CEO.

If you require external funding then please allow sufficient time for your sponsoring organisation to complete these arrangements. You can view a list of possible sponsoring organisations here: http://www.climateadaptation.cc/images/Description_Criteria_Funding_Organisation.pdf.

Does your organisation support this kind of training?

Again, policies regarding funding and time off for training can vary between organisations. It is useful to know if any of your employees have been granted such benefits as you can tailor your case accordingly. If your organisation does not usually grant this level of support then you will have to place more emphasis on the benefits to you personally and to the organisation through attending the course.

Approaching your employer

When making a case to your employer for support in terms of funding and/or time, you will need a clear explanation of:

- What you are asking for
- What you can offer in return
- The wider benefits your training will have for your organisation

It is worth considering:

- Which aspects of the course especially meet the needs of your organisation and what enhanced skills you personally will be able to contribute after training, as well as how these skills will impact on your colleagues, clients and other stakeholders
- What you can offer in return, e.g. a personal contribution towards the course costs, or an agreement to continue working for your employer for a minimum period of time after receiving training
- What measures you are willing to take to catch-up on time away from your usual role (e.g. working in the evenings and weekends while in Oxford: please note that there are some evening sessions and dinners scheduled into the programme but the majority will be free)

What are the benefits to your organisation?

You are the best person to understand how training will impact your performance in work and fulfil your organisation's specific objectives. However, some of the course benefits will apply to all participants' employers, such as:

- Project development - all participants bring a work project to the course. They receive expert advice on their work and have time to develop the project in the context of their learning, with new ideas and approaches
- Enhancing the organisation's collective knowledge of the most up-to-date theory and practice of climate change adaptation
- Increasing leadership capacity within the organisation
- Expand the organisation's network of global contacts in climate change adaptation, opening up opportunities for future collaboration/joint ventures
- Demonstrate their willingness to invest in developing employees, which increases staff motivation/retention, as well as competitive advantage
- The programme is taught by expert practitioners in global climate change adaptation in conjunction with leading academics from the University of Oxford

Further Information

If you have any other queries or require additional information, please don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing Lesley at (ldowning@climateadaptation.cc).

We are also happy to discuss the course with your manager or put you in touch with an alumnus of the course to discuss the outcomes.

You can also find alumni testimonials here: <http://www.climateadaptation.cc/our-work/adaptation-academy/alumni/testimonials>.