

The Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) Coffee Sustainability Program Compliance, Governance & Reporting Course Outline

Venue Requirements

As this is an online course, all students are expected to have access to a stable, high-speed internet connection in a distraction-free environment. Please avoid background noise (e.g., from a roastery, café, or other) when joining the course. Headsets are also recommended to ensure audio clarity. Students should further prevent outside interruptions, such as from pets or household activities.

Course Hours

This is a 12-hour course delivered in six 2-hour live, online class sessions. The time to prepare for and take the exam is outside of this 12-hour window.

Course Preparation

Students are expected to treat each class session as a "live course" and should be prepared to take notes in the manner that is best for them. Students should arrive at least 5 minutes before the start of the first class session, and at least 2 minutes before the start of the remaining class sessions. Finally, students should prepare their coffee or take their bathroom breaks before the start of each class session. There will be a 5-minute break midway through each class.

Course Description

The coffee industry is facing increasing demands for sustainability reporting and transparency, often in line with specific compliance mechanisms. The Compliance, Governance & Reporting course of the SCA Coffee Sustainability Program equips coffee professionals with the tools and knowledge they need to understand the evolving landscape of sustainability reporting across the value stream, including legislative requirements, compliance frameworks, and governance protocols.

Students will learn how to understand and engage with various frameworks, and explore how decision-making authority and sustainability outcomes are influenced by governance structures and power dynamics. Through practice with real-world examples, students will also gain a deeper understanding of voluntary versus mandatory sustainability due diligence, and will explore methodologies to apply reporting frameworks in their own contexts. Overall, upon completing this course, students will:

- Understand the landscape of mandatory due diligence and voluntary sustainability compliance frameworks, and be able to articulate their benefits and limitations
- Assess governance structures in the coffee sector and understand how they shape power and sustainability outcomes
- Gain insight in data collection for sustainability reporting

Exam Format

Students will have 34 minutes to complete the exam, unless otherwise discussed between them and their trainer. The exam is available in English, Spanish, Chinese (Traditional and Simplified) and Korean. To pass the exam, students must answer 70% of the questions correctly. There will be 32 questions in total, which will be a mixture of true or false and multiple choice. Upon receiving a passing score, students will receive a Compliance, Governance & Reporting certificate from SCA.

Topics Covered

Session 1: Coffee's History (2 hours)

- Introduction to the course structure, its goals, and key topics
- Review of coffee's history to understand how we got to where we are today, and to demonstrate how governance practices in coffee evolve over time
- Presentation on the foundations of due diligence and sustainability compliance for the coffee sector (i.e. the rise of Voluntary Sustainability Standards)

Session 2: Sustainability Legislation, Due Diligence & Compliance (2 hours)

- Exploration of sustainability legislation and its relevance for the coffee industry
- Discussion on how due diligence relates to sustainability legislation and addresses labor rights, social sustainability challenges, and environmental concerns
- Analysis of how different laws affect coffee supply chain actors in different ways

Session 3: Coffee Governance (2 hours)

- Definition of governance and an exploration of its role in sustainability outcomes
- Exploration of how power dynamics shape relationships between coffee supply chain actors
- Introduction to alternative governance models, such as cooperatives, B Corps, and more, with insight into how they shape compliance requirements

Session 4: Due Diligence in Context & Systems Thinking (2 hours)

- Examination of the challenges related to labor, gender, and other vulnerable groups throughout the coffee sector
- Discussion on how identity shapes access to resources, decision-making power, and levels of influence
- Introduction to due diligence and how to conduct a due diligence process to promote socioeconomic and environmental improvements in the value chain
- Assessment of the role of systems thinking to improve understanding and action

Session 5: Sustainability Reporting & Data for Reporting (2 hours)

- Explanation of the role and importance of sustainability reporting, and the relevance and complexity of data

- Definition of materiality assessments and an exploration of how they guide effective reporting
- Review of various types of data that can be useful for reporting, and discussion on the role of stakeholder collaboration when gathering data

Session 6: Moving from Reporting to Improved Strategy & Action (2 hours)

- Explanation of how to leverage sustainability reporting processes for improved strategy and improved data management systems
- Exploration of how to develop SMART goals and indicators
- Review of best practices for streamlined, transparent, and ethical reporting, including a discussion on how to identify and avoid greenwashing in sustainability communications