MBA Sustainability Leadership

Business Plan | Sustainable Fashion Institute | A Theory of Change

SUSTAINABLE FASHION INSTITUTE

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No portion of the work referred to in this project has been submitted in support for another degree or qualification of this institution or any other institution of learning.
I, Kelly Darcy, certify that this is an original piece of work. I have acknowledged all sources and citations. No section of this MBA project has been plagiarised. The use of AI was utilised for converting sound MP4 to word transcripts using Parrot.AI.

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Abstract

Research Context

The fashion industry is a major contributor to environmental degradation and social injustice, exacerbated by the rise of fast fashion. This phenomenon has led to exploitative labour practices, excessive waste, and significant pollution. This research explores the development of the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI), a proposed membership platform aimed at addressing these issues within the UK fashion education sector.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to evaluate and validate a new approach to sustainable development in fashion by establishing the SFI. The institute is designed to offer sustainability accreditation to fashion students and professionals, providing them with connectivity, credibility, and benchmarking to promote and advance sustainable practices within the industry.

Methodology Design

A multi-qualitative approach was utilised, incorporating various qualitative research methods such as a focus group, interviews and a collaborative set of workshops with students to coproduce the SFI, with an interpretive stance. The use of thematic analysis to gather rich, detailed insights from stakeholders, industry experts, and potential members. The research focused on understanding participants' perspectives and experiences related to sustainability in fashion education. The Theory of Change (ToC) model was employed to structure the findings and align the SFI's strategies with its goals and expected outcomes.

Findings

The research revealed a significant need for a structured sustainability accreditation system within the fashion industry. Participants expressed a strong demand for enhanced educational resources and a credible certification process. The ToC model was instrumental in identifying key activities, resources, and outcomes necessary for the SFI's success, providing a clear framework for its implementation.

Originality and Viability

This research offers an original contribution by applying a multi-qualitative approach with an interpretive stance to the development of a membership-based sustainability institute in the fashion sector. The SFI's approach is innovative in its application of the ToC model and its potential to provide a scalable solution to sustainability challenges. The viability of the SFI is supported by positive feedback from stakeholders and a robust plan for future growth and implementation.

Keywords

Sustainability, Fashion Education, Theory of Change, Accreditation, Multi-Qualitative Methods, Interpretive Research, Sustainable Development, Fast Fashion

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1. Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter Introduction:

The following chapter aims to provide contextualisation to the current sustainability issues facing the UK, and the UK fashion education system concerning sustainability, it also looks to explore fashion sustainability changemakers to identify gaps within the sector to apply the Theory of Change model to the proposed Sustainable Fashion Institute.

1.1 Context: Sustainability Strategies in Fashion

The primary goal of this project-based business plan dissertation is to validate an approach for promoting sustainable development within the UK higher education system. This is achieved by creating a membership platform that provides sustainability accreditation for fashion students, offering them enhanced connectivity, credibility, and benchmarking opportunities.

The theme for many researchers and academic institutions within fashion education is on topics surrounding sustainable development, as a growing concern spanning across all industries and covering a vast set of disciplines. The theme of the book Methods for Sustainability is “promoting, facilitating, mainstreaming and institutionalising changes so that sustainable development becomes the norm” (Hartz-Karp and Marinova, 2017). Such changes can have long-lasting positive effects on sustainable development but quantifying and using research methods for developing these systemic changes is not as easy, as Richard Smardon (2018) contextualises in his published review of the Methods for Sustainability, the difficulty of dealing with sustainability research, as well as many philosophical viewpoints

technological and deterministic perspectives, as well as economic transformation and sustainability governance issues, are among these perspectives. Rather than being a collection of sustainability studies, the book is more of a compendium of approaches for implementing sustainability. The research by Smardon (2018) influenced part of the idea for the Sustainable Fashion Institute along with Kate Raworths DEAL forum that developed through the success of Raworth, K. (2017) Doughnut Economics.

The fashion industry is one of the largest contributors to global environmental degradation and social injustice. The demand for fast fashion has led to exploitative labour practices (Joy et al., 2012), massive waste generation (Niinimäki, 2013), and significant pollution (Bick et al., 2018). The industry's practices result in high levels of textile waste and contribute to environmental degradation through chemical pollution and resource depletion (Allwood et al., 2006). Furthermore, the low-cost, high-turnover model of fast fashion exacerbates these issues by prioritising profit over sustainability and ethical labour practices (Cline, 2012; Perry, 2015).

1.2 Rationale: Net Zero, Fashion Industry Accreditations (Problem & Solution).

Net Zero:

The UK Government announced in October 2021 the strategy towards Net Zero by 2050, the ambitious plan will support the British economy to transition to a more sustainable future. The Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson's policies already

compromise of a Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution (GOV.UK, 2021) which was inherited by Rishi Sunak and now is at a review point with the new Labour Government.

As ambitious as the UK Government's strategy is, the focus of this research lies solely within the UK fashion industry and aims to contribute to the existing Sustainable Development Goals (SDG'S) set by the UN and the Net Zero Strategy by the UK government by acting as a 'Best Practice' and Change Making Facilitator to the UK fashion students, recent graduates, HE Institutions and fashion industry professionals.

Analysing sustainability accreditations within the fashion industry and their impact on students within the fashion education sector requires a multi-dimensional approach that considers various perspectives, including the evolving landscape of sustainability initiatives, educational practices, and student experiences. Below is a contextualised overview supporting the rationale for this research and business proposal.

Emergence of Sustainability Accreditations in the Fashion Industry:

Over the past decade, the fashion industry has faced increasing scrutiny over its environmental and social impacts, prompting a growing interest in sustainability practices (Pereira, Silva, & Dias, 2021). Various sustainability accreditations and certifications have emerged, aiming to assess and recognise fashion brands' commitment to ethical sourcing, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility. Examples include certifications like Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) (Brügel,

2016), Fair Trade Certified (Duque et al., 2017), and certifications related to sustainable materials (e.g., Cradle to Cradle Certified, OEKO-TEX Standard 100) (Shen et al., 2023).

Integration of Sustainability in Fashion Education:

Fashion education institutions have responded to industry demands by integrating sustainability principles into their curricula. Courses and programs now often include modules on sustainable design, responsible production practices, circular economy principles, and ethical supply chain management (Othmani et al., 2022). Many institutions also emphasise experiential learning opportunities such as internships, industry collaborations, and sustainability-focused projects to provide students with practical experience in applying sustainability concepts (Hruska et al., 2022).

Impact and opportunities for Students:

Sustainability accreditations in the fashion industry influence students in several ways. Awareness and Education: Accreditation and initiatives serve as case studies for students, raising awareness of sustainability issues and best practices within the industry. (Montoya et al., 2022). Career Aspirations: Exposure to sustainability accreditations may shape students' career aspirations, motivating them to seek employment opportunities with companies that prioritise ethical and sustainable practices (Fleșeriu, Duma, Nistor, & Păun, 2020). Skill Development: Sustainability-focused fashion coursework and projects equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to address sustainability challenges in their future careers within the fashion industry (Hasbullah et al., 2023).

Ethical Consumption and Careers in Fashion: Education on sustainability accreditations empowers students to make more informed choices as consumers, encouraging them to support brands with credible sustainability credentials (Ali et al., 2023).

Challenges and Opportunities:

Despite progress, challenges remain in fully integrating sustainability into fashion education (Jang & Kim, 2023). Such as resource Constraints: Limited resources, including faculty expertise and funding, may hinder institutions' ability to develop comprehensive sustainability curricula and initiatives. Industry Resistance: Some segments of the fashion industry may be resistant to change or slow to adopt sustainable practices, posing challenges for students seeking to align their values with potential employers (Romagnoli, Tarabu', Vishkaei, & De Giovanni, 2023).

However, there are also opportunities for collaboration and innovation: Industry Partnerships: Collaboration between fashion education institutions and industry stakeholders can facilitate knowledge exchange, research collaboration, and internship opportunities focused on sustainability (Song et al., 2022). Student Activism: Students can drive change by advocating for greater sustainability integration within their institutions, influencing curriculum development, and engaging in sustainability initiatives on campus. Student activism in higher education has been a subject of interest in recent literature (Dimuthu Kumari Fernando, 2022). Fashion students, in particular, have the potential to drive change through their activism, influencing curriculum development, and engaging in sustainability initiatives on campus. Additionally, their involvement can contribute to the development of

sustainable practices within their institutions (Posillico, Edwards, Roberts, & Shelbourn, 2021).

In conclusion, sustainability accreditations within the fashion industry play a significant role in shaping the educational experiences and career trajectories of students within the fashion industry. By integrating sustainability principles into fashion education and creating opportunities for collaboration between academia and industry, stakeholders can work together to address the environmental and social challenges facing the fashion industry and promote a more sustainable future (Geissdoerfer, Savaget, Bocken, & Hultink, 2017). This study proposes the Sustainable Fashion Institute as a future accreditation in response.

Competitor analysis

The (Table 1) below shows the four main competitors to the SFI in a SWOT format. This is later utilised within the business plan in chapter 5 (Tables 12 & 13) when turning the competitor analysis into a TOWS analysis, to look for strategic opportunities.

Doughnut Economics Action Lab (DEAL) **Overview:** DEAL is an initiative inspired by Kate Raworth's *Doughnut Economics*, aiming to operationalise the framework for creating a regenerative and distributive economy. DEAL focuses on helping cities, regions, and organisations implement the Doughnut model, which emphasises ecological boundaries and social foundations (DEAL, 2024) **Strengths:** ● **Innovative Framework:** DEAL uses the Doughnut Economics model, which is a holistic approach to balancing social and ecological needs. This unique model provides a comprehensive blueprint for sustainable development (Raworth, 2017). ● **Global Reach:** DEAL collaborates with various cities and organisations worldwide, enhancing its influence and adaptability across different	**Fashion Revolution** **Overview:** Fashion Revolution is a global movement campaigning for greater transparency and accountability in the fashion industry. It promotes sustainable fashion through advocacy, education, and consumer engagement (Fashion Revolution, 2024) **Strengths:** ● **High Visibility:** Fashion Revolution has significant media presence and a strong network of activists, which enhances its ability to influence industry practices (Fashion Revolution, 2024). ● **Comprehensive Approach:** The organisation addresses multiple aspects of sustainability, including labour rights, environmental impact, and ethical practices (Fashion Revolution, 2024). ● **Consumer Engagement:** It effectively engages consumers through campaigns like #WhoMadeMyClothes, raising awareness about

contexts (DEAL, 2024).

- **Community Focus:** DEAL emphasises local solutions and community engagement, tailoring strategies to specific regional needs.

Weaknesses:

- **Sector Specificity:** DEAL's focus is broader than fashion, which may limit its direct influence on fashion-specific sustainability issues. Its generalist approach might not address industry-specific challenges in depth.

Opportunities:

- **Partnership Potential:** There is an opportunity for DEAL to partner with fashion-focused organisations to incorporate its principles into the fashion industry's sustainability efforts.
- **Growing Interest in Sustainable Models:** Increasing global interest in sustainable and regenerative economic models could boost DEAL's influence and adoption (DEAL, 2024).

Threats:

- **Complex Implementation:** The complexity of implementing the Doughnut model might pose challenges for adoption in various sectors, including fashion.

fashion industry issues.

Weaknesses:

- **Campaign Saturation:** The widespread use of similar advocacy campaigns may lead to diminishing returns in terms of media impact and consumer engagement.

Opportunities:

- **Partnerships:** Collaborating with institutions and initiatives like DEAL and CISL could enhance its reach and effectiveness in driving systemic change in the fashion industry.
- **Educational Initiatives:** Expanding educational programs and resources could further increase awareness and drive sustainable practices among consumers and industry stakeholders.

Threats:

- **Industry Resistance:** The fashion industry's resistance to change and entrenched practices may hinder the effectiveness of advocacy campaigns.

Fashion Roundtable

Overview: Fashion Roundtable is a UK-based think tank and consultancy that works to influence policy and promote sustainability in the fashion industry through research, advocacy, and industry engagement (Fashion Roundtable, 2024)

Strengths:

- **Policy Influence:** Fashion Roundtable's focus on policy and industry engagement provides it with significant influence in shaping fashion industry practices (Fashion Roundtable, 2024).
- **Research and Reports:** It produces in-depth research and reports on fashion sustainability, offering valuable insights and recommendations for policy and practice (Fashion Roundtable, 2024).

Weaknesses:

- **Niche Focus:** While influential, its impact may be limited to policy circles and may not directly engage with grassroots consumer or industry movements.

Opportunities:

- **Collaborations:** Partnering with organisations like Fashion Revolution and DEAL could enhance its ability to implement sustainable practices across various fashion sectors.
- **Expanding Reach:** Increasing outreach to international stakeholders could broaden its

Cambridge Centre for Sustainable Leadership (CISL)

Overview: The Cambridge Centre for Sustainable Leadership (CISL) focuses on advancing sustainable leadership and practices through education, research, and consultancy. It provides strategic insights and support for integrating sustainability into business models. (CISL), 2024

Strengths:

- **Academic Rigour:** CISL's academic foundation provides a robust basis for its recommendations and strategies, enhancing credibility (CISL, 2024).
- **Broad Expertise:** The centre's expertise spans various sectors, including fashion, providing comprehensive strategies for sustainable business practices.

Weaknesses:

- **Broad Scope:** Its broad focus on multiple industries might dilute its specific impact on the fashion sector compared to more specialised organisations.

Opportunities:

- **Sector-Specific Programs:** Developing targeted programs for the fashion industry could leverage CISL's expertise in sustainable leadership to drive industry-specific change.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborating with organisations like Fashion Revolution and DEAL could enhance the implementation of sustainable practices in fashion.

influence beyond the UK. **Threats:** ● **Policy Implementation:** Challenges in translating policy recommendations into actionable changes within the industry could limit its impact.	**Threats:** ● **Implementation Gaps:** The challenge of translating strategic insights into practical, industry-specific actions could limit its impact on fashion sustainability.

Table 1. Competitor analysis table

1.3 Theoretical Framework: Application Towards Solution

In this business plan Dissertation, the Theory of Change (ToC) will serve as the foundational framework guiding the development and implementation of the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI). The ToC framework is particularly suited to this context as it provides a structured methodology for understanding how interventions lead to specific long-term outcomes. This theory not only focuses on mapping the causal pathways from activities to impact but also emphasises the assumptions that underpin these pathways, ensuring that the solution is grounded in practical, evidence-based strategies.

The core premise of ToC, as introduced by Carol Weiss (2005), involves articulating the steps that lead to desired long-term outcomes. In this case, the long-term goal is the widespread adoption of sustainable practices within the fashion industry, particularly through educational accreditation. To achieve this, ToC will help in identifying the necessary inputs, activities, and intermediate outcomes required to reach that goal.

By applying the (Diagram 1) ToC model to the SFI, the following steps will be outlined:

1. Inputs: The resources, partnerships, and expertise required to establish the SFI. This includes collaboration with academic institutions, sustainability experts, and fashion industry stakeholders to design relevant accreditation modules.

2. Activities: The key activities that will be undertaken by the SFI, such as developing accredited sustainability programs for students and professionals, creating workshops, and establishing a certification process.

3. Outputs: The immediate results of these activities, such as the number of students who enrol in accredited programs, the number of courses designed, and the partnerships formed with industry bodies.

4. Outcomes: The medium-term outcomes that result from the successful implementation of the SFI programs. This includes improved employability for graduates, increased credibility for academic institutions offering accredited programs, and enhanced sustainability practices across participating organisations.

5. Impact: The long-term change anticipated through the SFI's work. The ultimate goal is to influence the fashion industry by embedding sustainability into the core of fashion education and professional practices, creating a ripple effect that leads to industry-wide change.

The ToC framework will also be instrumental in evaluating the effectiveness of the SFI's activities. By defining specific measurable indicators at each stage—such as the number of accreditations awarded, the uptake of sustainable practices by

graduates, and the engagement levels of businesses—this framework allows for continuous monitoring and adaptation.

The ToC will address the assumptions that are integral to the SFI's success. For instance, there is an assumption that businesses and academic institutions will recognise the value of sustainability accreditation and actively participate. These assumptions will be critically examined throughout the research process to ensure that they hold true and that any risks associated with unmet assumptions are mitigated.

Through the application of the Theory of Change, this dissertation aims to provide a roadmap for the development and operationalisation of the Sustainable Fashion Institute. This structured approach will help ensure that the proposed solution is not only feasible but also scalable and impactful in driving sustainable change across the fashion industry.

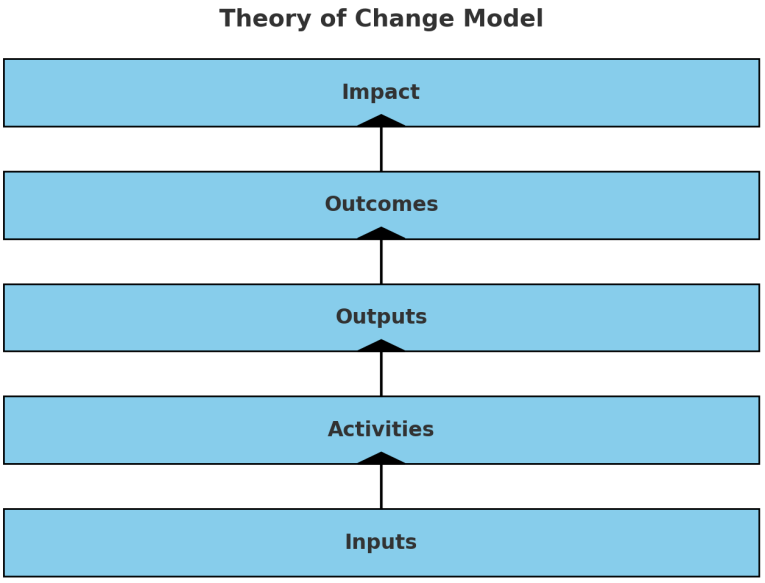

Figure 1. ToC Framework Outline.

1.4 Research Aim & Objectives

Aim;

The aim of the research is to provide a business plan that has tested and validated an accreditation membership institute called Sustainable Fashion Institute which will develop a Theory of Change model to support a more sustainable future for fashion students, brands and fashion professionals. This will result in the launch of the accreditation of the SFI to students within the London College of Fashion as a primary partner.

Objectives;

1. To contextualise the current sustainability accreditations within the fashion industry and students studying within the fashion industry.
2. To critically review existing literature on the topics of the Theory of Change, Circular Business Models, accreditations, PRSB's and benchmarking, to then develop the framework for the Theory Of Change for the Sustainable Fashion Institute gaps within the current offerings.
3. To investigate what potential members and stakeholders of the proposed Sustainable Fashion Institute will expect and how they will benefit from the membership and accreditation.
4. To understand and utilise the findings to develop the business opportunity and viability for the proposed business Sustainable Fashion Institute

5. To provide strategic and managerial recommendations for the Institute of Sustainable Fashion ahead of the proposed launch. Resulting in a business plan for the Sustainable Fashion Institute.

Table 2. Objectives of the Business Plan Dissertation

1.5 Research Questions;

Q1 How can accrediting students and professionals within the fashion industry contribute to sustainable development as a whole?
Q2 What do the future members of the proposed Sustainable Fashion Institute expect from the membership? Developed from a Theory of Change.
Q3 What managerial or strategic recommendations can be produced for the Sustainable Fashion Institute to drive success when launching with the first University partners? Developed with a lean business model canvas.

Table 3. Research questions for the Business Plan Dissertation

1.6 Theoretical and Managerial Contributions

This research aims to make contributions both theoretically and managerially through the development of a Theory of Change and a Social Enterprise Business Model Canvas for the Sustainable Fashion Institute. Theoretically, it enriches existing literature by applying the Theory of Change framework specifically to the fashion industry's sustainability challenges, offering a structured approach to understanding and achieving sustainable outcomes in this sector.

Managerially, the study provides a practical blueprint through the Social Enterprise Business Model Canvas, which outlines key components and strategies for establishing and managing the Sustainable Fashion Institute. This model serves as a strategic tool for stakeholders in the fashion industry, helping them to implement and scale sustainability initiatives effectively. By bridging theoretical insights with practical applications, the research contributes to advancing sustainability practices and informs best practices for similar organisations aiming to drive positive change within the fashion industry.

1.7 Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1 Introduction and contextualistion of the study: This chapter seeks to contextualise the current sustainability challenges in the UK, particularly within the fashion education system. It will also explore influential movements driving change in fashion sustainability to pinpoint sector gaps and start the foundations to later apply the Theory of Change model to the proposed Sustainable Fashion Institute.
Chapter 2 This chapter will review the existing literature on sustainability accreditation, membership organisations, entrepreneurship and sustainability, and the Theory of Change.
Chapter 3 This chapter details and justifies the research design and methods employed in the primary research for this project-based business plan dissertation, as well as the related research questions.

Chapter 4 This chapter presents findings from applying the Theory of Change to the proposed Sustainable Fashion Institute. It outlines how this framework helped identify essential outcomes, inputs, and processes for the Institute's success. It summarises insights from data analysis, stakeholder interviews, and comparisons with similar organisations, highlighting how the Theory of Change can guide strategy development, impact measurement, and address gaps in the fashion industry's sustainability efforts.
Chapter 5 This chapter wraps up the findings and details the practical aspects of launching the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) using a Lean Business Model Canvas (LBMC). It also addresses study limitations, offers recommendations for future research, and outlines the next steps for implementing the strategies developed.

Table 4. Chapter Outline of the Business Plan Dissertation.

2. Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter Introduction:

The following chapter will provide a review of the current literature within the context of sustainability accreditation, membership bodies, entrepreneurship and sustainability and the Theory of Change which will eventually become the value proposition for the business plan.

2.1 The Role of Accreditation in Reducing Fashion Industry Waste and Promoting Sustainability

Waste in the Fashion Industry

The fashion industry is one of the largest contributors to environmental waste globally. In 2020 alone, the industry was responsible for generating approximately 92 million tons of textile waste annually (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2020). Much of this waste ends up in landfills, with less than 1% of clothing being recycled into new garments (Global Fashion Agenda, 2017). This vast amount of waste is driven by the fast fashion model, which encourages high consumption and short product life cycles. According to the European Environment Agency (2019), clothing consumption in Europe alone creates 4 to 5 tons of CO2 emissions per person each year, alongside large quantities of water and chemical use.

Trends in Fashion Waste

While there have been some attempts to curb waste through circular fashion initiatives and recycling programs, overall reductions in fashion waste have been minimal. A study by the McKinsey Global Institute (2020) notes that efforts to reduce

waste in the fashion sector have led to only a 3% decrease in waste production over the last five years. This gradual and small reduction highlights the difficulty of implementing wide-scale systemic changes in the industry. Moreover, textile waste is expected to increase by 60% by 2030, as global demand for clothing continues to rise (Textile Exchange, 2021).

Importance of Accreditation in Promoting Sustainability

Given these alarming trends, accreditation can serve as a critical tool in promoting sustainability within the fashion industry. Accreditation programs, such as OEKO-TEX® and the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), provide fashion brands and institutions with a framework for certifying sustainable practices. These accreditations not only encourage the adoption of eco-friendly materials and processes but also foster transparency and accountability. By obtaining sustainability certifications, fashion brands can mitigate their environmental impact and influence consumer behaviour, as certifications are increasingly valued by eco-conscious consumers (Shen et al., 2023).

In the context of the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI), offering accreditation to students and professionals ensures that individuals entering the industry are equipped with the knowledge and skills to contribute to waste reduction and sustainable practices. These programs can support the industry in achieving more substantial waste reductions, shifting the current trend from minimal improvements to more significant and impactful changes.

2.2 Sustainability Strategies utilising the Theory of Change

2.2.1 Theory of Change Introduction

It's difficult to pinpoint when the term "theory of change" initially appeared, but a clue can be found in the substantial body of theoretical and applied progress in the assessment field, particularly in the work of Huey Chen, Peter Rossi, Michael Quinn Patton, and Carol Weiss. For decades, these evaluation theorists and practitioners, plus a handful of others, have concentrated on how to apply programme theories to assessment (Theory of Change Centre, 2021)

Kirkpatrick's 'Four Levels of Learning Evaluation Model' started a sequence of work that led to the application of theories of change in evaluation in the late 1950s. Daniel Stufflebeam's CIPP (context, input, processes, and products) and the widely used logical frameworks (log frames) or logical models, which set out causal chains usually consisting of inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes coupled to long-term goals, have contributed to further progress and evolution.

The phrase "Theory of Change" was popularised by Carol Weiss (2005) to denote the set of assumptions that explain both the mini-steps that lead to the long-term objective and the linkages between programme activities and outcomes that occur along the way. For this body of research and project-based dissertation, the researcher will be using Weiss's model. Weiss urged complicated community-based initiative designers to be explicit about the theories of change that guide their work, arguing that doing so would improve their overall evaluation plans and increase their capacity to claim credit for outcomes predicted in their theory. The aim is to lay out

the sequence of expected outcomes as a result of an intervention, then develop an evaluation strategy around tracking whether these expected results are generated, using a common sense approach.

The Theory of Change (ToC) is a comprehensive methodology used primarily in the fields of strategic planning, program evaluation, and organisational development. It offers a structured approach to understanding how change happens within complex systems, such as communities, organisations, or societies (Chen, 2015; Weiss, 1995; Funnell & Rogers, 2011).

2.2.2 Theory of change steps applied to the Sustainable Fashion Institute

These steps are proposed by the researcher to be validated by research questions to the research participants shown in chapter four.

New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) defines a theory of change (ToC) as a process that connects an organisation's goals to its activities and explains how its actions achieve the desired impact. It's a way to show how a charity's path goes from needs to activities, outcomes, and impact. NPC considers a ToC to be the foundation of an organisation's strategy, evaluation, communication, and measurement (NPC, 2019).

NPC's ToC process involves discussions and research that result in a summary, which may include a diagram. The process can help people think, discuss, and collaborate, which can lead to stronger teams and more considered decision making.

The output can provide clarity and purpose, and a clear plan for evaluating and communicating work both internally and externally (NPC, 2019).

Listed below is a breakdown of the 10 key ToC components followed by critical analysis of its key components: NPC created a guidance document of the Theory of Change Steps, these components will be developed within the conclusion chapter based on the findings and then applied within the business plan of this business dissertation in a LBMC format.

1. Situational Analysis
2. Target Groups
3. Impact
4. Outcomes
5. Activities
6. Change Mechanisms
7. Sequencing -
8. Theory of Change Diagram
9. Stakeholders and Enabling Factors
10. Assumptions

Mapping the NPC 10 steps Theory of Change to the Lean Business Model Canvas or the Social Business Model Canvas (whichever becomes more appropriate as the study progresses) ensures that each section of the LBMC or SBMC is covered, from understanding the problem and defining target groups to outlining activities, impacts, and assumptions. This comprehensive approach provides a robust framework for developing, implementing, and evaluating the Sustainable Fashion Institute's

business model in a collaborative way making the most of having the stakeholders inputs, each step below in (Table 5) aligns what will be needed for the business plan and how the Theory of Change can be applied to inform it, this will also help inform some of the research questions. The opportunities and strengths from combining the ToC and LBMC or SBMC can be categorised into the following sections.

Comprehensive Problem Understanding: Mapping the Theory of Change (ToC) to the LBMC or SBMC ensures a deep understanding of the problem, as both models start with clearly identifying the issues and needs of the target groups. The ToC's structured framework provides a systematic way to align the problem definition with the business model's value proposition, ensuring that the solutions are grounded in the actual needs of stakeholders (Weiss, 1995). This approach strengthens the model by anchoring it in real-world challenges that the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) aims to address.

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration: By applying the ToC in tandem with the LBMC/SBMC, the process encourages collaborative input from stakeholders at every stage, from defining the problem to identifying activities and assumptions. This fosters co-production of solutions, which has been shown to increase the relevance and acceptance of initiatives (Elkington, 2018). Engaging stakeholders also ensures that the business model is reflective of real needs, creating stronger buy-in and ownership of the outcomes.

Alignment of Activities and Impact: The ToC's emphasis on linking activities to desired outcomes fits well with the LBMC's or SBMC's focus on delivering value

through specific channels and activities. By mapping these steps, the SFI can ensure that every activity outlined in the business model contributes to the larger impact goals, enhancing both operational efficiency and effectiveness in achieving sustainability (Funnell & Rogers, 2011). This also helps avoid mission drift by ensuring that all business activities are aligned with the core objectives.

Clear Assumptions and Risk Management: The ToC inherently focuses on making assumptions explicit and testing them, which is essential in both the LBMC and SBMC. Understanding the underlying assumptions behind the business model's activities and how they relate to desired outcomes enables better risk management. This approach allows the SFI to identify potential roadblocks early and make adjustments, which is crucial for the success of any business model (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).

Impact Measurement and Evaluation: A key strength of integrating ToC with the business model is the focus on long-term impact evaluation. The ToC framework provides a structured way to track whether the planned activities lead to the desired social and environmental outcomes, aligning with the LBMC's or SBMC's focus on delivering value to beneficiaries and the community (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). This ensures that the SFI can demonstrate measurable impact, a crucial factor in securing funding and maintaining credibility in the sustainability sector.

Adaptability and Flexibility: Both the LBMC and SBMC are known for their adaptability, and integrating them with the ToC's iterative nature allows the business model to remain flexible. As the external environment or stakeholder needs evolve,

the ToC can be revisited, and changes can be mapped directly onto the business model (Blank, 2013). This ensures that the SFI remains responsive to changes in the fashion industry, particularly with regards to sustainability trends and innovations.

Situation Analysis (Step 1)	**LBMC or SBMC Coverage:** Market Problem/Opportunity: This section will capture the current state and challenges in fashion education and sustainability, identifying gaps and opportunities that the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) aims to address.	**ToC Alignment:** Context and Challenges: Provides the foundational understanding of the problem or need that the SFI addresses, aligning with the Situation Analysis in the LBMC.
Target Groups (Step 2)	**LBMC or SBMC Coverage:** Customer Segments: Define and describe the different groups of people or organisations that will benefit from or use the SFI platform, such as fashion students, educators, and industry professionals.	**ToC Alignment:** Stakeholders: Identifies who will be engaged and impacted by the SFI, ensuring the platform meets the needs of its intended users.
Impact (Step 3)	**LBMC or SBMC Coverage:** Value Proposition: Articulate the long-term goals and benefits that the SFI will deliver to its users, such as enhanced sustainability practices and improved industry standards.	**ToC Alignment:** Long-Term Outcomes: Defines the ultimate impact that the SFI seeks to achieve, linking the business model's value proposition to the broader goals of sustainable development in fashion education.
Outcomes (Step 4)	**LBMC or SBMC Coverage:** Key Activities and Deliverables: Identify the specific outcomes the SFI aims to achieve through its activities and services, such	**ToC Alignment:** Intermediate Results: Details the short-term and intermediate changes expected from the

	as increased sustainability awareness and improved accreditation standards.	platform, directly related to the activities and outputs.
Activities (Step 5)	**LBMC or SBMC Coverage:** Key Activities: Outline the core actions and processes involved in delivering the SFI's services, such as developing the accreditation criteria, organising events, and creating educational resources.	**ToC Alignment:** Implementation Actions: Specifies the actions needed to achieve the desired outcomes, ensuring that all essential tasks are covered.
Change Mechanisms (Step 6)	**LBMC or SBMC Coverage:** Value Proposition (Mechanisms): Describe how the SFI's activities will lead to the desired changes and impact. This includes explaining the mechanisms through which the platform will drive sustainability in fashion education.	**ToC Alignment:** Pathways to Change: Articulates the processes and strategies that will convert activities into outcomes and impact, providing a rationale for how change will be achieved.
Sequencing (Step 7)	**LBMC or SBMC Coverage:** Timeline and Milestones: Define the sequence and timeline for implementing activities and achieving milestones. This includes planning the rollout of the platform and accreditation.	**ToC Alignment:** Implementation Timeline: Ensures that activities are ordered logically to achieve outcomes efficiently and effectively, aligning with the overall project timeline.
Theory of Change Diagram (Step 8)	**LBMC or SBMC Coverage:** Visual Representation: Create a visual representation of how the SFI's activities and strategies lead to the desired outcomes and impact.	**ToC Alignment:** Diagram: Provides a clear visual summary of the ToC, illustrating the connections between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. This diagram helps communicate the business model's logic and structure.

Stakeholders and 'Enabling Factors' (Step 9)	**LBMC or SBMC Coverage:** Key Partners: Identify partners, collaborators, and other stakeholders who will support the SFI's implementation and success.	**ToC Alignment:** Support and Resources: Recognise key stakeholders and enabling factors that will facilitate the SFI's success, including partnerships, resources, and institutional support.
Assumptions (Step 10)	**LBMC or SBMC Coverage:** Risk Assessment: Outline the assumptions underpinning the SFI's model and assess potential risks and uncertainties.	**ToC Alignment:** Validation and Testing: Address assumptions about stakeholder engagement, resource availability, and the broader context. Validate these assumptions through research and adjust the model as needed.

Table 5. Opportunities and strengths from combining the ToC and LBMC or SBMC.

2.2.3 Assumptions:

ToC starts by identifying underlying assumptions about how change occurs in a given context. These assumptions often reflect beliefs about causality, the relationships between various actors, and the conditions necessary for change (Vogel, 2012; Weiss, 1995). Critically examining these assumptions is crucial because they shape the entire theory and its outcomes (Connell & Kubisch, 1998; Anderson, 2005). Unacknowledged or faulty assumptions can lead to ineffective strategies or interventions (Stein & Valters, 2012).

Outcomes: ToC delineates the long-term goals or outcomes desired, often referred to as the "ultimate impact." These outcomes are usually broad and aspirational, reflecting the overarching vision of the change initiative. However, it's essential to ensure these outcomes are realistic and achievable within the given

context. Unrealistic goals can undermine motivation and breed disillusionment among stakeholders (Stein & Valters, 2022; Mayne, 2020; Rogers, 2014).

Pathways of Change: ToC maps out the intermediate outcomes and pathways leading from activities to the ultimate impact. This involves identifying key drivers of change, causal pathways, and critical milestones along the way (Anderson, 2005; Connell & Kubisch, 1998). A critical analysis here involves ensuring that the pathways identified are evidence-based and supported by robust data or theory (Vogel, 2012).. Without solid evidence, interventions may be based on wishful thinking rather than practical strategies Stein & Valters, 2012).

Interventions: ToC specifies the actions or interventions necessary to bring about the desired change. These interventions can take various forms, including policy reforms, behaviour change programs, capacity-building initiatives, or advocacy campaigns. It's crucial to critically evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions by considering their feasibility, scalability, and alignment with the identified pathways of change. Additionally, unintended consequences or negative side effects should be anticipated and addressed (Funnell & Rogers, 2011; Stein & Valters, 2022; Mayne, 2019).

Assumptions about Context: ToC recognises that the context in which change occurs is dynamic and multifaceted. Therefore, it's essential to explicitly articulate assumptions about the external environment, including political, economic, social, and cultural factors. A critical analysis involves regularly reassessing these assumptions to ensure they remain relevant and responsive to changing

circumstances. Ignoring contextual factors can lead to strategies that are mismatched or ineffective in practice (Vogel, 2019; Mayne, 2020; Bamberger et al., 2016).

Learning and Adaptation: ToC emphasises the importance of continuous learning and adaptation throughout the change process. This involves monitoring and evaluating progress, gathering feedback from stakeholders, and adjusting strategies as needed. A critical analysis of ToC should include mechanisms for learning and adaptation, ensuring that feedback loops are built into the process to facilitate ongoing improvement and innovation (Valters et al., 2016; Vogel, 2019; Mayne, 2020).

While the Theory of Change provides a valuable framework for understanding and guiding social change efforts, its effectiveness depends on the rigour and integrity of its application. Critically analysing the underlying assumptions, pathways of change, interventions, contextual factors, and learning mechanisms is essential for ensuring that ToC remains a practical and relevant tool for driving meaningful change (Stein & Valters, 2022; Mayne, 2020; Funnell & Rogers, 2011).

2.3 Entrepreneurship and Sustainability

2.3.1 The Social Enterprise Model Canvas (SEMC)

The LBMC adapts this framework to focus more on lean principles and startup dynamics (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). Ries (2011) further develops these ideas in The Lean Startup, where he emphasises continuous innovation and customer

validation as core components of successful startups. The LBMC incorporates these elements to help startups efficiently test and refine their business models (Ries, 2011). The SEMC employs building blocks, similar to the famous Business Model Canvas (BMC) of Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010), as a template for identifying critical features and analysing their interactions. In contrast to the BMC, the SEMC's building blocks are meant to make framing and solving the most critical difficulties encountered by hybrid companies easier.

The Social Enterprise Model Canvas (SEMC) is a Lean Business Model Canvas (LBMC) designed to help social companies create their organisational settings, solve the mission measurement paradox, and address strategy, legitimacy, and governance issues. Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship (2014) provides insights into innovative social enterprise models and frameworks, including adaptations of the Business Model Canvas tailored to social enterprises. This research highlights how these models can address specific social and governance challenges (Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, 2014). Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) introduced the Business Model Canvas in their book Business Model Generation, which provides a visual framework for designing, describing, and pivoting business models.

The Social Enterprise Model Canvas (SEMC) further developed by Sergio Sparviero (2019) is a conceptual tool that helps researchers and social entrepreneurs understand or design the structure of organisations dedicated to achieving social goals. It is based on a review of writings that contribute to knowledge in a variety of social sciences fields. Sociology, organisational studies, management, business ethics, and study on the nonprofit sector, social enterprises

and entrepreneurship, social responsibility, social innovation, public administration, and the various business models are among those fields, this approach is considered by the researcher as a potential complementary output to the proposed Theory of Change.

By merging market and social ideals, or key features of both charity and business, social businesses seek to build and legitimise new institutional forms (McInerney 2012). (Ebrahim, Battilana, and Mair 2014; Galaskiewicz and Barringer 2012; Mair, Mayer, and Lutz 2015). They've also been described as organisations that 'mix elements such as value systems and action logics of various sectors of society into their business models' (Ludeke-Freund et al. 2016), as well as having a strong analytical capacity and a problem-solving orientation, all while attempting to exploit social innovation with an entrepreneurial mindset (Perrini and Vurro 2006), Sergio Sparviero (2019) puts governance and social value proposition at the heart of the social enterprise model canvas.

2.3.2 Lean Business Model Canvas and ToC applied

The table below shows the development of how exploring and collaborating with key stakeholders whilst utilising the Theory of Change (ToC) can be developed to inform the Lean Business Model Canvas (LBMC) in execution of the Sustainable fashion Institute. Doing this provides several strengths and opportunities for the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI). It offers a comprehensive understanding of problems, aligning activities with measurable outcomes, ensuring that every aspect of the business model contributes directly to sustainability goals (Weiss, 1995; Funnell & Rogers, 2011). The ToC encourages stakeholder collaboration, co-creation and

increasing relevance, while also identifying assumptions and risks early, aiding in risk management (Elkington, 2018; Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).

Additionally, the ToC's adaptability allows the SFI to scale and refine its business model in response to evolving market demands, improving flexibility and innovation (Blank, 2013). The alignment between ToC and LBMC also strengthens the SFI's ability to secure funding by demonstrating clear links between activities and impact, making it attractive to investors and partners (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). Overall, this approach enhances the SFI's potential for impactful, sustainable growth in the fashion industry.

Lean Business Model Canvas (LBMC)	**Theory of Change (ToC)**	**Details and Examples developed from literature**	**Citations from academic sources**
1. Market Problem/Opportunity	Situation Analysis	- **Context:** Challenges in fashion education regarding sustainability. - **Example:** Lack of comprehensive sustainability training and accreditation in UK fashion education.	Hartz-Karp, J., & Marinova, D. (2017). *Methods for Sustainability*. Routledge. Smardon, R. (2018). *Sustainability and Transformation*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Customer Segments	Target Groups	- **Stakeholders:** Fashion students, educators, industry professionals. - **Example:** Students seeking sustainability accreditation; educators needing resources.	Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut Economics*. Chelsea Green Publishing. Elkington, J. (2018). *The Breakthrough Challenge*. Wiley.
3. Value Proposition	Impact	- **Long-Term Goals:** Improved sustainability in fashion education and industry. - **Example:** Achieve greater adoption of sustainable practices and higher industry standards	Leisinger, K. (2019). *Sustainable Development Goals: A Critical Review*. Springer. Sroufe, R. (2017). *Sustainability and Business*. Routledge.

4. Key Activities	Outcomes	- **Intermediate Results:** Increased awareness and knowledge of sustainability. - **Example:** Students and educators integrate sustainability into curricula and practices.	Hartz-Karp, J., & Marinova, D. (2017). *Methods for Sustainability*. Routledge. Smardon, R. (2018). *Sustainability and Transformation*. Cambridge University Press.
5. Key Activities	Activities	- **Implementation Actions:** Develop platform, create accreditation criteria, host events. - **Example:** Design membership platform, establish sustainability workshops.	Elkington, J. (2018). *The Breakthrough Challenge*. Wiley. Sroufe, R. (2017). *Sustainability and Business*. Routledge.
6. Value Proposition (Mechanisms)	Change Mechanisms	- **Pathways to Change:** Accreditation drives motivation; networking facilitates knowledge sharing. - **Example:** Accreditation provides credibility; events develop collaboration.	Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut Economics*. Chelsea Green Publishing. Leisinger, K. (2019). *Sustainable Development Goals: A Critical Review*. Springer.
7. Timeline and Milestones	Sequencing	- **Implementation Timeline:** Plan and sequence activities. - **Example:** Platform launch, criteria rollout, event scheduling.	Hartz-Karp, J., & Marinova, D. (2017). *Methods for Sustainability*. Routledge. Elkington, J. (2018). *The Breakthrough Challenge*. Wiley.
8. Visual Representation	Theory of Change Diagram	- **Diagram:** Visualise inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. - **Example Diagram:** Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact.	Sroufe, R. (2017). *Sustainability and Business*. Routledge. Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut Economics*. Chelsea Green Publishing
9. Key Partners	Stakeholders and 'Enabling Factors'	- **Support:** Identify key partners and resources. - **Example:** Collaborations with educational institutions, industry experts, and sustainability organisations.	Leisinger, K. (2019). *Sustainable Development Goals: A Critical Review*. Springer. Elkington, J. (2018). *The Breakthrough Challenge*. Wiley.

10. Risk Assessment	Assumptions	- **Validation and Testing:** Examine assumptions and risks. - **Example:** Assumptions about stakeholder engagement, resource availability, and feasibility.	Hartz-Karp, J., & Marinova, D. (2017). *Methods for Sustainability*. Routledge. Smardon, R. (2018). *Sustainability and Transformation*. Cambridge University Press.

Table 6. Lean Business Model Canvas and ToC applied supported by academic literature.

2.4 Professional Institutes & Membership Organisations

2.4.1 Value and Benefits within membership organisations

Professional organisations are important in contemporary society and in people's lives because they provide members with access to desired products and services, a feeling of belonging and identity, and the ability to network with others who have similar interests (Gruen 2000).

In a research study by Markova et al, (2013) the researchers looked at the reasons why professionals join and stay in professional organisations. They looked at the actual and conceptual benefits that an organisation might offer to entice people to join. Overall membership satisfaction and inclination to renew the membership were connected to satisfaction with these perks. They also took into account the impact of customer service on members' perceptions. Based on 1,980 members of a prominent international accounting association's comments, noting that younger participants were less inclined to worry about the value of the benefits,

whereas the longer-tenured members had more consideration of retained membership.

Similarly a study surveying over 13,000 participants factors that could influence members behavioural intentions showed that members' impressions of the personal and professional benefits supplied by associations with which they are affiliated, as well as their satisfaction with those benefits, were studied. Members' evaluations of personal and professional benefits were positively connected with their intentions to renew and promote membership, according to our findings. If a member perceives a higher level of benefits, he or she is more likely to be satisfied with the benefits and, as a result, more inclined to renew membership or promote it to others (Ki, E.J. and Wang, Y., 2016).

The findings from (Markova et al, 2013) revealed that tangible benefits and outstanding customer service are important variables in membership retention. They discovered that members' appreciation for these advantages was substantially connected to member satisfaction, based on particular appraisals of the value of conferences, publications, and certification. The proposed research framework of the Theory of Change alongside the Social Enterprise Model Canvas aims to clarify what tangible benefits and core values the Sustainable Fashion Institute will have.

2.4.2 Community Building within Memberships

Building community within membership bodies like the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) or the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) can be analysed through

the lens of community psychology and organisational behaviour theories. These can be utilised to launch the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI),

part of their self-concept from the groups they belong to (Tajfel & Turner, 2019). Within the context of membership bodies, members may develop a sense of identity and belonging based on their affiliation with CMI or CIM. Community-building efforts can leverage this by emphasising shared professional identities and common goals among members (Ellemers et al., 2020; Haslam et al., 2018).

Sense of Community: McMillan and Chavis (1986) proposed four elements of a sense of community: membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and shared emotional connection. Membership bodies can create a sense of community by providing opportunities for members to actively participate, influence decision-making processes, fulfil professional needs through resources and networking, and cultivate emotional bonds through shared experiences and support (McMillan, 2020; Pretty, Bishop & Fisher, 2018; Sonn, Stevens & Bishop, 2019).

Social learning theory, originally developed by Albert Bandura, emphasises the importance of observational learning, imitation, and modelling in the acquisition of behaviours (Bandura, 2018). Within membership bodies, community building can facilitate social learning by providing platforms for members to observe and learn from each other's experiences, expertise, and best practices. This can occur through mentorship programs, knowledge-sharing sessions, and collaborative projects (Smith & Blake, 2020; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2021).

Community of Practice: Coined by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, the concept of communities of practice emphasises the importance of social learning and knowledge sharing within groups of individuals who share a common domain of interest. Membership bodies can be seen as communities of practice where professionals within a specific field or industry come together to exchange knowledge, collaborate on projects, and collectively advance their expertise (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2021; Roberts, 2020; Cox, 2021).

Organisational Culture: Organisational culture encompasses the shared values, norms, beliefs, and behaviours within an organisation. Membership bodies can cultivate a strong organisational culture that promotes collaboration, professionalism, and continuous learning among members. This culture can be reinforced through organisational policies, communication strategies, and leadership practices that prioritise community building and member engagement (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2021; Hatch, 2021; Cameron & Quinn, 2020).

Leadership and Governance: Effective leadership and governance structures are crucial for nurturing community within membership bodies. Leaders play a key role in setting the tone, vision, and direction for the community, while governance mechanisms ensure transparency, accountability, and member representation in decision-making processes. By curating inclusive leadership and participatory governance, membership bodies can empower members to actively contribute to the community's development and success (Northouse, 2022; Deem, 2020; Goleman, 2021).

In conclusion, community building within membership bodies like CMI or CIM involves leveraging psychological and organisational theories to develop a sense of identity, belonging, and shared purpose among members. By creating environments that facilitate social learning, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, membership bodies can enhance professional development, promote networking opportunities, and strengthen the overall community experience for their members (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2021; Northouse, 2022; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2021).

2.5 Accreditations and Benchmarking

2.5.1 Rationale

Professional groups can offer a range of advantages to their members (Ki, E.J. and Wang, Y., 2016), for starters, these organisations may confirm that their members have sufficient competence in their fields (Greggs-McQuilkin 2005; Schein 1968). Second, associations direct the use of this information for the public benefit, establish a code of ethics (Bruhn 2001), and help their members develop appropriate behaviours (Greenwood, Suddaby, and Hinnings 2002). Third, professional organisations provide a significant social purpose for members who are similar in their interests and occupations (Markova et al. 2013).

2.5.2 Academic Literature supporting the recommendations for the SFI

The following table summarises the links and key areas the SFI needs to address with supporting academic arguments. This approach ensures that the recommendations are grounded in research and highlight the practical solutions SFI should implement to promote sustainability which are further discussed in section 5.1

Key Area to Address	**Recommendation**	**Supporting Academic Argument**
Sustainability Education	Develop a curriculum on sustainable fashion practices and innovation.	Hartz-Karp and Marinova (2017) highlight the importance of education in promoting systemic sustainability changes.
Accreditation Standards	Implement accredited programs aligned with global sustainability standards.	Brügel (2016) and Shen et al. (2023) argue that credible certifications like GOTS and OEKO-TEX enhance brand credibility and trust.
Industry Collaboration	Develop partnerships between industry leaders, educators, and students.	Elkington (2018) suggests that multi-stakeholder collaboration is crucial for achieving sustainability goals in business.
Student Engagement	Engage students in real-world sustainability projects and internships.	Fletcher (2014) demonstrates that hands-on experience in sustainable fashion empowers students to implement lasting change.
Research & Development	Invest in R&D for innovative sustainable materials and processes.	Sroufe (2017) notes that continuous R&D is essential for the development of eco-friendly products and processes.
Global Outreach	Expand the proposed SFI's accreditation reach to international institutions.	Leisinger (2019) emphasises the importance of global engagement to drive widespread adoption of sustainable practices.

Table 7. Academic Literature supporting the recommendations for the SFI

3. Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction:

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research design and methods employed in the primary research for this project-based business plan dissertation. It aims to detail the methodological approach used to address the research questions and to justify the chosen methods in the context of the study's objectives. We begin by outlining the overall research strategy, including the rationale behind selecting specific qualitative and quantitative techniques. This includes a discussion on the research design, data collection procedures, sampling methods, and analytical tools employed.

The chapter further explains how these methods align with the project's goals, ensuring the collection of relevant and reliable data to support the development of the proposed Sustainable Fashion Institute. It will also address the ethical considerations and limitations encountered during the research process. By thoroughly detailing and justifying the research approach, this chapter sets the foundation for understanding the validity and reliability of the findings presented in subsequent sections.

3.1 Research Design

To discuss the research design the research onion by Saunders et al (2015) is utilised. The research philosophy underpinning the research is interpretivism as well as taking an inductive approach, the methods chosen are multi-method qualitative consisting of a Theory of Change workshop and some Semi Structured Interviews.

Narrative enquiry was chosen and the research is cross-sectional and only looks at a particular point in time (Saunders et al, 2009).

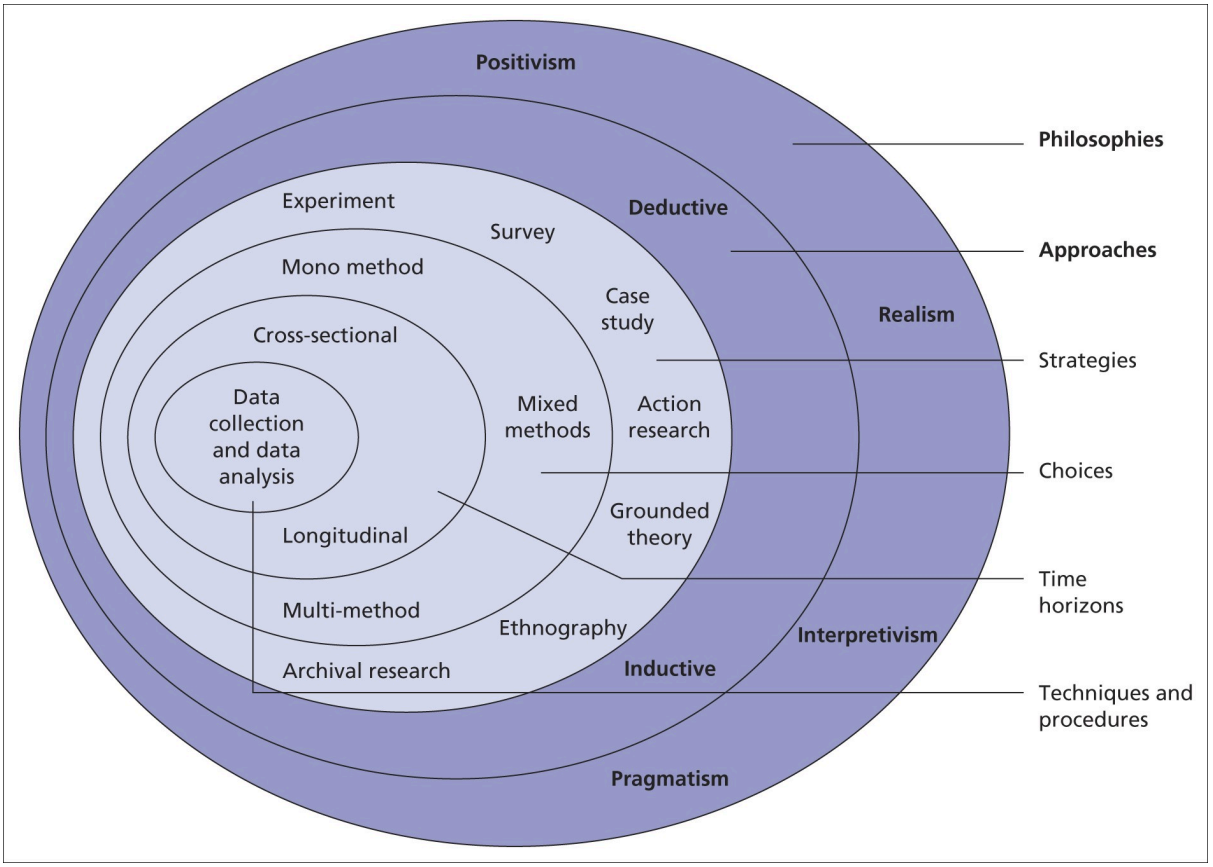

Figure 3. Saunders Research Onion

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the set of beliefs, principles, and assumptions that guide the researcher's approach to conducting research and interpreting findings (Mason et al., 2022). It underpins the entire research process, influencing decisions regarding research design, methodology, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Research philosophy is often categorised into three main paradigms: positivism, interpretivism (or constructivism), and pragmatism (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).

Positivism, as a research philosophy, is based on the belief that knowledge can be discovered through empirical observation and measurement (Gao and Cheng, 2020). This philosophy emphasises the existence of an objective reality that exists independently of the observer (Tharib, 2023). Positivist researchers typically adhere to the scientific method (Armstrong and Green, 2022), emphasising quantifiable data (Bobin et al., 2018), deductive reasoning (Ling et al., 2023), and the pursuit of generalisable laws or principles (Gagler et al., 2021). They seek to minimise bias and subjectivity in their research, often using structured methods such as surveys, experiments, and statistical analysis (Mehrad and Zangeneh, 2019). Positivism is commonly associated with quantitative research approaches (Mehrad and Zangeneh, 2019).

Interpretivism, also known as constructivism or social constructivism, holds that reality is socially constructed and subjective, shaped by individuals' perceptions, experiences, and interpretations (Mahadevan, 2023). Researchers adopting an interpretivist stance aim to understand the meanings and perspectives of research participants within their social context. They emphasise qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis, seeking to uncover the subjective meanings and nuances of human behaviour and phenomena (Peters and Halcomb, 2015; Hinshaw et al., 2012; Kok, 2023). Interpretivism prioritises depth, contextuality, and the researcher's reflexivity in understanding complex social phenomena (Dodgson, 2019).

Pragmatism: Pragmatism is characterised by its focus on practicality, problem-solving, and the flexibility to use multiple research methods and paradigms

based on the research question and context (Pring, 2021). Pragmatist researchers prioritise the usefulness and applicability of research findings in addressing real-world problems, rather than adhering strictly to one philosophical perspective. They may employ a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, drawing on the strengths of each approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Pragmatism emphasises the importance of context, plurality, and the integration of theory and practice in research.

The researchers' choice of research philosophy depends on various factors, including their ontological and epistemological assumptions, the nature of the research topic, the research questions, and practical considerations such as resource constraints and ethical considerations. It's important for researchers to critically reflect on their philosophical stance and its implications for the research process, ensuring alignment between their chosen approach and the objectives of the study. This dissertation examines a membership body and investigates its theory of change, therefore adopting an interpretive research philosophy can be particularly suitable. Subjective meaning looks at how interpretivism aligns with studying a theory of change within a membership body context (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Mason et al., 2022).

Subjective Meaning and Contextual Understanding: Interpretivism acknowledges that reality is socially constructed and subjective, emphasising the importance of understanding individuals' perspectives, experiences, and interpretations within their specific social context (Kennedy and Willer, 2022). In the context of a membership body, this means recognising that the theory of change and

its implementation are shaped by the beliefs, values, and experiences of the members, as well as the broader organisational and societal context in which the membership body operates.

Qualitative Methods for Understanding Complexity: Interpretivist researchers typically employ qualitative research methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis to explore the rich and nuanced meanings underlying human behaviour and social phenomena (Taskin, 2021). Qualitative methods are well-suited for investigating the theory of change within a membership body, as they allow researchers to delve deeply into members' perceptions, motivations, and experiences related to the organisation's goals, activities, and impact.

Reflexivity and Researcher Engagement: Interpretivism emphasises the importance of reflexivity, encouraging researchers to critically reflect on their own assumptions, biases, and perspectives throughout the research process (Berger, 2015). When studying a theory of change within a membership body, researchers should be attentive to their own positionality and how it may influence their interpretation of the data. Engaging with members and stakeholders in a collaborative and participatory manner can enhance the credibility and validity of the research findings(Secules et al., 2021).

Contextualised Understanding of Change Processes: Interpretivism recognises that change processes are complex and context-dependent, influenced by a variety of factors including organisational culture, leadership dynamics, power

relations, and external environmental forces (Cunliffe, 2021; Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Hatch, 2021).

Interpretivism offers a suitable philosophical framework for studying a theory of change within a membership body, enabling researchers to explore the subjective meanings, contextual dynamics, and complex processes involved in organisational change from the perspective of the members and stakeholders involved (Saunders et al., 2019; Mason et al., 2022; Cunliffe, 2021).

3.3 Research Strategy

A narrative enquiry will be used to support the utilisation of the enquiry of the participant's lived experience and the context of the participant's lives (Creswell, 2009). Semi-structured interviews and focus groups will be utilised to gain a perspective both from the partner university and the potential members. Students will actively work on collaborating on launching a pilot of the SFI, this will enrich the narrative enquiry for the findings within the primary research.

An Inductive Approach, The goals of employing an inductive approach are to (1) reduce a lot of raw text data into a small amount of time. (2) to draw explicit linkages between the study aims and the findings; (3) to construct a model or explanation concerning the conclusions gained from the raw data (Thomas, D.R., 2003).

A Multi Qualitative Method research will be conducted in a single study, the researcher blends quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods,

approaches, concepts, or language. Mixed methods research also aims to legitimise the use of several methodologies to answer research questions rather than limiting or constraining researchers' options. It is a sort of research that is both vast and creative, rather than one that is restricted (Esbjörn-Hargens, S., 2006).

A cross-sectional time horizon is the only option for this study due to the short time constraint, with student participants involved in the study for a period of approximately 8 weeks within a unit in block two of an academic year. A cross-sectional approach allows the researcher to capture data at a single point in time, making it suitable for time-limited studies (Saunders et al., 2019; Bryman, 2016).

3.4 Data Collection

The data will be collected by some in depth interviews, a focus group and contributions from students on a collaborative challenge who are invited to build the Theory of Change for the SFI with the researcher

Participant for Interview:

HM: LCF FBS Business Development Lead

Participants of the Focus Group:

KD: Facilitator and researcher for the focus group

LG: LCF Dean of Fashion Business School

BG: LCF Senior Enterprise Lecturer

JL: LCF Course Leader Fashion Design Marketing

AM: LCF Course Leader Fashion Marketing

JWL: LCF Recent Graduate of MA Fashion Enterprise

For this focus group, the use of a practical tool from the Nesta DIY ToC workbook will be utilised, (Nesta, 2011) as seen below in figure 2.

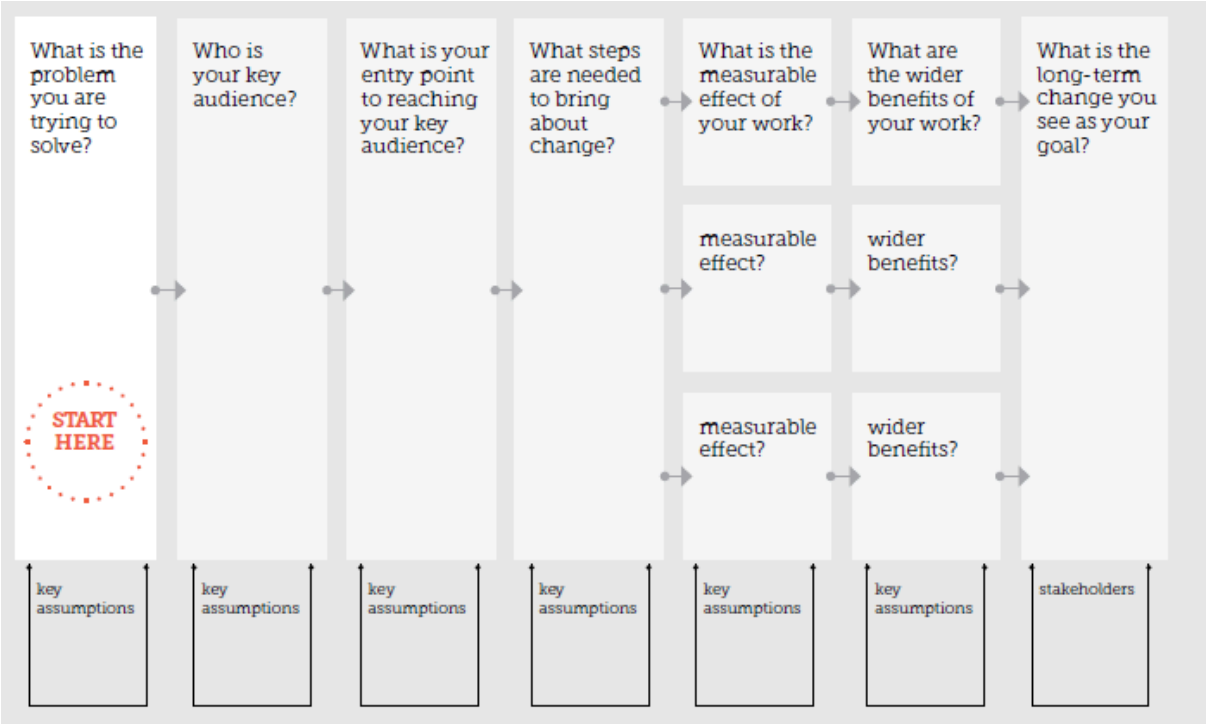

Figure 2. Nesta ToC DIY Kit

The tool aids in aligning stakeholders into the larger end goal and helps them understand their role in achieving it.

Questions in (Table 8) focused on engaging participants in a discussion about the Institute for Sustainable Fashion and its approach to sustainability. The questions aimed to gather insights on the Theory of Change, stakeholder analysis, and potential actions for the institute.

1. "In your words, not mine, on the topic of this Institute for Sustainable Fashion and accreditations, what do you think the problem is that I am trying to solve?"
2. "Who do you think the key stakeholders are? Who are the key audiences?"
3. "What is the entry point to reaching those audiences?"
4. "Thinking of the essence of this membership and this accreditation, what's the entry point for reaching the audience?"
5. "What steps are needed to bring about this change for the SFI to get off the ground?"
6. "What is the measurable effect that could come out of this?"
7. "What do you think the wider benefits from those measurable effects will impact?"
8. "What is the long-term change that you think, in your opinion, do you see as the goal for the SFI organisation?"
9. "What could hinder the progress of this? What assumptions am I possibly making that might hinder the progress of this?"
10. "How can I gain support? What factors might be outside of my control in order for that to happen?"

Table 8. Questions for the ToC Focus Group Participants.

These questions are designed to facilitate a co-productive discussion on the establishment and impact of the Institute for Sustainable Fashion, focusing on sustainability practices, stakeholder engagement, and the broader implications of the institute's work with the help of those that can support the institute launch.

Participants of the Collaborative Challenge

Six groups of around 4/5 student teams will be working on the challenge their names have been removed for data protection

The following call out as seen in (Figure 4) and provocation was given to the collaborative challenge students to collaboratively build and contribute to the SFI. The use of their work will inspire some of the findings for the primary research. This will support the narrative inquiry of the qualitative research.

Sustainable Fashion Institute

"How can we build a membership body that offers sustainable fashion accreditation, called the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI)? The SFI, founded by LCF lecturer Kelly Darcy, is similar to that of the CIM for Marketing or CMI for Leadership/Management, how can this kind of benchmarking enable sustainable fashion?"

Overview:
The Institute for Sustainable Fashion (SFI) is currently an newly constituted beyond profit social enterprise start-up with an originating vision led by one person, the founder & project lead, LCF Lecturer Kelly Darcy alongside a couple of very engaged stakeholders who value and receive consultation within the realm of sustainable fashion, however this in isolation is not going to meet the demand of the change needed to make real impact to the systemic changes that are so greatly needed within the space of sustainable fashion. One standalone effort can start ripples but cannot make huge waves, however, collectively with the ambition of launching and building an active and engaged membership body, the voices of many can enable such collaboration and change.

The collaborative challenge therefore is to co-create this change initiative by joining and expanding the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI). The action is to co-create a membership body with early adopters shaping the narrative & future.

Provocation/ challenge/ scenario/ concept:

Students can choose from the below examples what area they would like to focus on or a combination of all

1. **Membership Structure**
    a. Curate the core offer (product: what do we do, what don't we do) and research/map routes to SFI accreditation with LCF then expanding to other HE fashion providers. This may include customer research/ stakeholder research.
    b. Design membership tiers/segments and the relevant joining criteria or fees (i.e. Student, Professional, Honorary). Initiate / recruit / start the actual membership base, invitations.
2. **Branding & Marketing Plan**

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University of the Arts London

20 John Princes Street
London W1G 0BJ
United Kingdom

+44(0)20 0000 0000
info@fashion.arts.ac.uk
www.arts.ac.uk/fashion

a. Produce a strategic marketing plan to sustain the development for years 1-3 requiring everything from logo, values, brand personality and guidelines, key messaging, tone and channels.
b. Design, test and launch the beta website and ISF membership registration platform.

3. **Launch Event Planning & Execution**
   a. Design an initial on-mission, ticketed (digital only / physical with an option for digital) sustainable soft launch event. Select & approach panel members/speakers/sponsors for launch event.
   b. Ensure clarity and messaging for speakers (speech writing) on what the value proposition/offer is, who are we reaching, partnering with, what does impact look like, shared systems change ambitions.
4. **Governance and Ethics**
   a. In line with the sustainable mission, consider and propose prospective non-executive board members (decision makers) and advisory board members (influence and thought leaders).
   b. Produce a draft SFI Manifesto, Code of Conduct and Board Terms of Reference consistent with the SFI core values.

Insert link to film to support the provocation/ challenge/ scenario/ concept
https://vimeo.com/604825441

Considerations:

1. See attached one page overview of the SFI Contextualisation, Vision, Mission and Values – this is the consistent thread across each of these challenges.

2. You would be the inaugural members of the ISF, what would you want the ISF to be and what would support your sustainable fashion practice?

3. There are some great voices and changemakers out there already such as Fashion Revolution, Fashion Roundtable, Good On You etc., whilst they do not aim to have a membership body that accredits their individuals similar to the CIM or CMI, what other USP's can the ISF develop to ensure successful systems change and point of difference within the realms of sustainable fashion?

Timeline:

21/09/23- Collaborative Challenge Academic Partner Q&A evening event (6.30- 8.30pm)

12/10/23- CONSULTANCY 1

19/10/23- Research and self-directed study

26/10/23- CONSULTANCY 2- Student pitch to Supervisor/ Partner to address challenge

02/11/23- CONSULTANCY 3

16/11/23- CONSULTANCY 4

30/11/23- CONSULTANCY 5- FINAL PRESENTATION

Deliverables:

Open to student suggestions

Courses:

We are seeking 4 groups of up to 5 students and would suit the following Masters' courses:

- MA Fashion Design Technology: Menswear
- MA Fashion Design Technology: Womenswear
- MA Fashion Artefact
- MA Footwear
- MA Fashion Futures
- MA Fashion, Film and Digital Production
- MA Fashion Photography
- MA Strategic Fashion Marketing
- MA Fashion Design Management
- MA Fashion Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- MSc Fashion Forecasting

How to apply: **This is information for students- no additions required**
If you are interested in this opportunity, please choose 'title' project on (*the link)* as one of your 2 project choices. You can apply for two projects each. This will be monitored. If you have any issues, please contact cu@fashion.arts.ac.uk

DEADLINE: Monday 3 October, 9am

You will be notified of your final project on Wednesday 5 October by the Collaborative Challenge Team.

Figure 4. call out for the collaborative challenge students

3.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify and analyse patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the context of evaluating the Theory of Change (ToC) for the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI), thematic analysis allows for a comprehensive understanding of how different elements of the ToC interact and contribute to the institute's objectives. By systematically analysing stakeholder interviews, survey responses, and case studies, thematic analysis can reveal recurring themes related to sustainability challenges in fashion education, the needs of different stakeholder groups, and the effectiveness of proposed interventions (Nowell et al., 2017).

For instance, in this study, thematic analysis could uncover key themes such as the lack of comprehensive sustainability training and the need for practical, accredited courses, aligning with findings from previous research that highlight gaps in current fashion education systems (Fletcher, 2014; Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013).

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are critical components of research quality, ensuring that the findings accurately represent the phenomena being studied and can be consistently reproduced. Validity refers to the degree to which a research instrument measures what it intends to measure, encompassing aspects such as content validity, construct validity, and external validity (Bryman, 2016). It ensures that the results are applicable and meaningful within the context of the research questions. Reliability, on the other hand, focuses on the consistency and stability of the research outcomes

over time and across different contexts or samples (Saunders et al., 2019). A reliable study produces the same results when replicated under similar conditions. In qualitative research, reliability may involve achieving consistency in data coding and interpretation, while validity may focus on how well the findings represent participants' perspectives. To enhance both validity and reliability, it is essential to use clear operational definitions, ensure careful sampling, and apply appropriate data collection techniques.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics are essential for ensuring that the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) adheres to ethical standards, protecting participants' rights and maintaining research integrity, in line with the University of Wales Trinity St David's guidelines. Key considerations include informed consent, ensuring participants are fully aware of the study's purpose and risks before agreeing to participate (Harriss & Atkinson, 2021). Confidentiality is vital, requiring the secure handling of sensitive data and participant privacy (Barker, 2022). Researchers must respect participants' rights to withdraw at any time and treat them with dignity (Bryman, 2016). Additionally, measures must be taken to avoid harm, with ethical approval and risk assessments conducted beforehand (Robson & McCartan, 2020). Ensuring diversity and inclusion is critical to avoiding bias, while transparency regarding conflicts of interest and adhering to rigour in data collection and reporting are crucial for maintaining trust (Saunders et al., 2019). Ethical review is required to monitor compliance with these standards (Harriss & Atkinson, 2021).

3.8 Questions for the Focus Groups and Student Presentations

The (Table 6) in the literature review showing the Lean Business Model Canvas and ToC applied has been revised below in (Table 9) removing the academic sources and adding questions for the purposes of questions to ask within the primary research.

Lean Business Model Canvas (LBMC)	**Theory of Change (ToC)**	**Details and Examples**	**Questions For the Participants**
1. Market Problem/Opportunity	Situation Analysis	- **Context:** Challenges in fashion education regarding sustainability. - **Example:** Lack of comprehensive sustainability training and accreditation in UK fashion education.	Q1. What are the current challenges in integrating sustainability into fashion education? Q.2 How do stakeholders perceive the existing solutions?
2. Customer Segments	Target Groups	- **Stakeholders:** Fashion students, educators, industry professionals. - **Example:** Students seeking sustainability accreditation; educators needing resources.	Q.3 Who are the primary stakeholders for the SFI platform? Q.4 What specific needs do these stakeholders have?
3. Value Proposition	Impact	- **Long-Term Goals:** Improved sustainability in fashion education and industry. - **Example:** Achieve greater adoption of sustainable practices and higher industry standards	Q.5 What long-term benefits do stakeholders expect from the SFI? Q.6 How will the SFI contribute to sustainability in fashion education?
4. Key Activities	Outcomes	- **Intermediate Results:** Increased awareness and knowledge of sustainability. - **Example:** Students and educators integrate sustainability into curricula and practices.	Q.7 What activities will lead to increased awareness of sustainability? Q.8 How do stakeholders engage with these activities?
5. Key Activities	Activities	- **Implementation Actions:** Develop platform, create	Q.9 What specific activities will be implemented?

		accreditation criteria, host events. - **Example:** Design membership platform, establish sustainability workshops.	Q.10 How will these activities be executed effectively?
6. Value Proposition (Mechanisms)	Change Mechanisms	- **Pathways to Change:** Accreditation drives motivation; networking facilitates knowledge sharing. - **Example:** Accreditation provides credibility; events develop collaboration.	Q.11 How will the SFI's activities lead to desired outcomes? Q.12 What mechanisms will ensure effective change?
7. Timeline and Milestones	Sequencing	- **Implementation Timeline:** Plan and sequence activities. - **Example:** Platform launch, criteria rollout, event scheduling.	Q.13 What is the proposed timeline for implementing the SFI? Q.14 How will milestones be achieved and tracked?
8. Visual Representation	Theory of Change Diagram	- **Diagram:** Visualise inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. - **Example Diagram:** Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact.	Q15. How will the Theory of Change be visualised? Q.16 What elements will need to be included in the diagram?
9. Key Partners	Stakeholders and 'Enabling Factors'	- **Support:** Identify key partners and resources. - **Example:** Collaborations with educational institutions, industry experts, and sustainability organisations.	Q.17 Who are the key partners and supporters for the SFI? Q.18 What enabling factors are necessary for success?
10. Risk Assessment	Assumptions	- **Validation and Testing:** Examine assumptions and risks. - **Example:** Assumptions about stakeholder engagement, resource availability, and feasibility.	Q.19 What assumptions underpin the SFI model? Q.20 What are the potential risks and how can they be mitigated?

Table 9. A revised table of the Lean Business Model Canvas and ToC applied adding questions for the primary research.

4. Chapter Four: Findings and development of the Theory of Change Model Developed for the Business Report

Chapter Introduction:

In this chapter, presented are the findings from the research conducted to apply the Theory of Change to the proposed membership body, the Sustainable Fashion Institute. This section outlines how the Theory of Change framework has been used to identify key outcomes, inputs, and processes necessary for the Institute's success. It will discuss the insights gained from data analysis, stakeholder interviews, and comparative studies of similar organisations. These findings will illustrate how the Theory of Change can guide the development and implementation of the Institute's strategies, measure its impact, and address gaps in the current sustainability landscape within the fashion industry.

4.1

Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis is presented below in three sections, with the individual interview, focus group and finally a student co-production designing of the SFI is also summarised.

4.1.1

Summary of the Interview with (HM)

HM manages external relations with professional bodies at London College of Fashion.

Topic, LCF's strategic accreditation initiatives with entities, facing challenges like UAL lawyer complications, focus on enhancing courses in fashion marketing and visual merchandising through accreditations from the Chartered Institute of Marketing and others. The interview discusses financial strategies, sustainability efforts, and the complexities of PSRBs and QA. It highlights the importance of professional networking, the impact of SBC and Textile Institute resources, and the significance of CMI awards and PRIME. Concluding with plans to incorporate these insights into MBA reports, the dialogue emphasises boosting student engagement and course value.

4.1.2

ToC Focus Group HE Stakeholders

The workshop discussed the Institute for Sustainable Fashion, focusing on engaging stakeholders and defining unique selling points and accreditations, using the Theory of Change and materials from the FBS office, influenced by Nesta. Key topics included identifying audience engagement strategies, project validation, and government interest. BG and AM, both fashion course lecturers, discussed their backgrounds, the creative allure of fashion, and strategies for nurturing superstar students, amidst a competitive yet affectionate faculty dynamic. The conversation also covered contributions to a book, the importance of academic discourse, and the

social aspect of their meetings. The dialogue aimed at launching an institute for a potential accreditation, focusing on sustainability, with insights from Vanessa Spence of ASOS, and addressing consumer culture and cognitive dissonance in sustainability practices.

Based on the transcript of the handwritten notes from the ToC workshop, several key themes emerge related to the goals, challenges, and strategic approaches for the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) and its proposed accreditation program. A table format of these themes are within the appendices.

1. The Problem and Need for Accreditation

Theme: Clarifying Sustainability and Its Impact on Employability and Credibility

Problem Statement: The core problem being addressed is the lack of clear, standardised knowledge and skills related to sustainability within the fashion industry. The term "sustainability" is often seen as vague or generic, with many students graduating with self-proclaimed expertise but lacking a universally recognised framework to validate their knowledge (e.g., "Sustainability is a vague/generic term but is increasingly growing in importance...").

Solution: The proposed accreditation serves to provide both students and institutions with a "badge" that enhances employability and credibility. This accreditation would act as a quality stamp, making the skills and knowledge acquired through education more transparent and meaningful to employers.

2. Key Stakeholders and Audiences

Theme: Identifying and Engaging Key Stakeholders

Stakeholders: The key stakeholders include university academic institutions, fashion professionals, graduates, businesses, and industry collaborators. These groups have a vested interest in ensuring that sustainability education is rigorous and meaningful, which directly impacts their reputation and operational effectiveness.

Target Audience: The target audience encompasses junior employees, fashion employers (brands, design studios, manufacturers), and industry collaborators from related fields such as tech or industrial design. Engaging these audiences effectively is crucial for the success of the SFI.

3. Entry Points and Strategic Partnerships

Theme: Establishing a Framework for Collaboration and Validation

Entry Points: The entry points for reaching the target audience include membership models, partnerships with existing organisations (e.g., Fashion Council, Higg Index, B-Corp), and platforms such as websites or networks. Online applications, part-time courses, and employer sponsorships are also potential mechanisms for validation and engagement.

Strategic Partnerships: Collaboration with recognized bodies like ASOS or similar organisations in other fields is essential for establishing credibility. These partnerships can help in validating the accreditation and ensuring it aligns with industry needs.

4. Implementation Steps and Challenges

Theme: Steps for Establishing the SFI and Overcoming Obstacles

Formation of SFI: The formation of the institute requires industry buy-in, promotion of benefits, and the establishment of industry-recognised standards. The strategy involves gradually building credibility through recognised industry standards and forming partnerships with large companies.

Challenges: Key challenges include the need for a clear and meaningful framework, ensuring the accreditation is more than just a "badge," and addressing the diverse needs of different sectors. The framework must be robust enough to provide competitive advantages to institutions and companies while avoiding the pitfalls of greenwashing.

5. Measurable Effects and Long-Term Goals

Theme: Measuring Success and Driving Long-Term Change

Measurable Effects: Success can be measured through the number of accreditations awarded, improvements in student employability, and shifts in industry knowledge. The aim is to establish a clear change in how sustainability is perceived and implemented across the fashion industry.

Long-Term Goals: The long-term goal is to create a widely understood standard for sustainability within the fashion industry. This involves not only educating individuals but also changing the processes and approaches of businesses. The ultimate vision is to eliminate greenwashing and replace it with genuine, measurable sustainability practices.

6. Assumptions and Risks

Theme: Addressing Assumptions and Mitigating Risks

Assumptions: Key assumptions include the belief that brands and institutions will value the accreditation and that it will enhance employability. There's a need to validate these assumptions through market research and stakeholder engagement to ensure the proposal's viability.

Risks: Potential risks involve the accreditation not being valued by the industry or failing to enhance employability. The program's success depends on its ability to provide real competitive advantages and meet the diverse needs of different sectors.

7. Enablers and External Factors

Theme: Leveraging Resources and Addressing External Dependencies

Enablers: Critical enablers include securing funding, forming strategic partnerships, and leveraging support from influential organisations such as LCF or FBS. Advisory boards and consultations with experts (e.g., Paloma Wool Consultancy) could provide the necessary guidance and support.

External Factors: Factors outside the SFI's control, such as industry trends, funding availability, and institutional support, could significantly impact the initiative's success. Addressing these factors proactively is essential for gaining the necessary backing and achieving long-term sustainability.

Conclusion

The thematic analysis reveals that the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) aims to address a critical gap in the fashion industry by providing a clear, standardised framework for sustainability education and accreditation. The initiative seeks to enhance employability and credibility, create industry-wide standards, and drive

long-term change in how sustainability is perceived and practised. However, success will depend on effectively engaging key stakeholders, validating assumptions, and navigating potential challenges and risks.

4.1.3

Analysis from Collaborative Challenge Students working on their version of building the SFI

Two teams took on a general approach to what they envisaged the SFI would be, with both of those teams even renaming the SFI to the Conscious Fashion Network (CFN).

Four other teams split some of the focus in their branding, ethics and governance or planning an event launch.

The findings have been compiled into (table 10) below and the visual outputs are within the appendices.

Visual plan to combine the ToC to inform the LBMC output as a business proposal

Lean Business Model Canvas (LBMC)	**Theory of Change (ToC)**	**Details and Examples** **(From Chapter 2 literature review)**	**Questions** **(Developed in chapter 3 methodology)**	**Main Findings (These will be linked to each section of the business plan in chapter 5)**
1. Market Problem/ Opportunity	Situation Analysis	- **Context:** Challenges in fashion education regarding sustainability. - **Example:** Lack of comprehensive sustainability training and accreditation in	Q1. What are the current challenges in integrating sustainability into fashion education? Q.2 How do stakeholders perceive the existing solutions?	- Fashion educators report insufficient training resources. - Students express a need for more practical sustainability guidance.

		UK fashion education.		
2. Customer Segments	Target Groups	- **Stakeholders:** Fashion students, educators, industry professionals. - **Example:** Students seeking sustainability accreditation; educators needing resources.	Q.3 Who are the primary stakeholders for the SFI platform? Q.4 What specific needs do these stakeholders have?	- Students need accredited sustainability courses. - Educators require tools for curriculum integration.
3. Value Proposition	Impact	- **Long-Term Goals:** Improved sustainability in fashion education and industry. - **Example:** Achieve greater adoption of sustainable practices and higher industry standards	Q.5 What long-term benefits do stakeholders expect from the SFI? Q.6 How will the SFI contribute to sustainability in fashion education?	- Stakeholders expect enhanced sustainability credentials. - SFI is anticipated to set new industry standards.
4. Key Activities	Outcomes	- **Intermediate Results:** Increased awareness and knowledge of sustainability. - **Example:** Students and educators integrate sustainability into curricula and practices.	Q.7 What activities will lead to increased awareness of sustainability? Q.8 How do stakeholders engage with these activities?	- Development of workshops and resources increases awareness. - High engagement in accreditation processes.
5. Key Activities	Activities	- **Implementation Actions:** Develop platform, create accreditation criteria, host events. - **Example:** Design membership platform, establish sustainability workshops.	Q.9 What specific activities will be implemented? Q.10 How will these activities be executed effectively?	- Platform development involves creating user-friendly features. - Workshops are scheduled to address key sustainability topics.

6. Value Proposition (Mechanisms)	Change Mechanisms	- **Pathways to Change:** Accreditation drives motivation; networking facilitates knowledge sharing. - **Example:** Accreditation provides credibility; events develop collaboration.	Q.11 How will the SFI's activities lead to desired outcomes? Q.12 What mechanisms will ensure effective change?	- Accreditation increases motivation for sustainable practices. - Networking events enhance collaboration among stakeholders.
7. Timeline and Milestones	Sequencing	- **Implementation Timeline:** Plan and sequence activities. - **Example:** Platform launch, criteria rollout, event scheduling.	Q.13 What is the proposed timeline for implementing the SFI? Q.14 How will milestones be achieved and tracked?	- Platform is launched within the first quarter. - Milestones include completion of accreditation criteria and initial workshops.
8. Visual Representation	Theory of Change Diagram	- **Diagram:** Visualise inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. - **Example Diagram:** Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact.	Q15. How will the Theory of Change be visualised? Q.16 What elements will need to be included in the diagram?	- Diagram clearly shows the flow from activities to impact. - Visual representation helps stakeholders understand the model.
9. Key Partners	Stakeholders and 'Enabling Factors'	- **Support:** Identify key partners and resources. - **Example:** Collaborations with educational institutions, industry experts, and sustainability organisations.	Q.17 Who are the key partners and supporters for the SFI? Q.18 What enabling factors are necessary for success?	- Key partners include universities and industry bodies. - Support from sustainability organisations facilitates implementation.
10. Risk Assessment	Assumptions	- **Validation and Testing:** Examine assumptions and risks. - **Example:**	Q.19 What assumptions underpin the SFI model?	- Assumptions about stakeholder interest are validated. - Risks include

		Assumptions about stakeholder engagement, resource availability, and feasibility.	Q.20 What are the potential risks and how can they be mitigated?	potential funding shortfalls, mitigated by securing partnerships.

Table 10. Adapted table from table 6 and table 9 summarised final column highlighting the thematic findings.

Figure 5 (below) presents a Venn diagram illustrating the core components and relationships identified by the student groups during their work on the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) project. The diagram highlights four intersecting elements that are central to the SFI's mission: Sustainable Fashion Students & Professionals, Higher Education, Co-production & Collaboration, and Accreditation & Membership Institute.

The four elements are key pillars for developing sustainability, integrity, collaboration, and accreditation in fashion education and industry. Sustainable Fashion Students & Professionals focus on engaging individuals committed to sustainability in fashion, while Higher Education represents the academic institutions that provide the foundational knowledge and resources to support sustainable practices. The Co-production & Collaboration element emphasises the importance of partnership between academia, industry, and students in creating meaningful sustainability solutions. Finally, the Accreditation & Membership Institute is central to validating and formalising the expertise of members through sustainability certifications and benchmarking.

The intersection of these components highlights the collaborative and integrative nature of the SFI, where students, educators, and industry professionals come

together to advance sustainability. The inclusion of terms like Sustainability, Integrity, Collaboration, and Accreditation shows the values that drive the SFI's efforts. The diagram was derived from student feedback and research, capturing the complex interplay of stakeholders and activities that contribute to the success of the Sustainable Fashion Institute. This visual representation aids in understanding how these interconnected components can collectively drive sustainable development in the fashion industry.

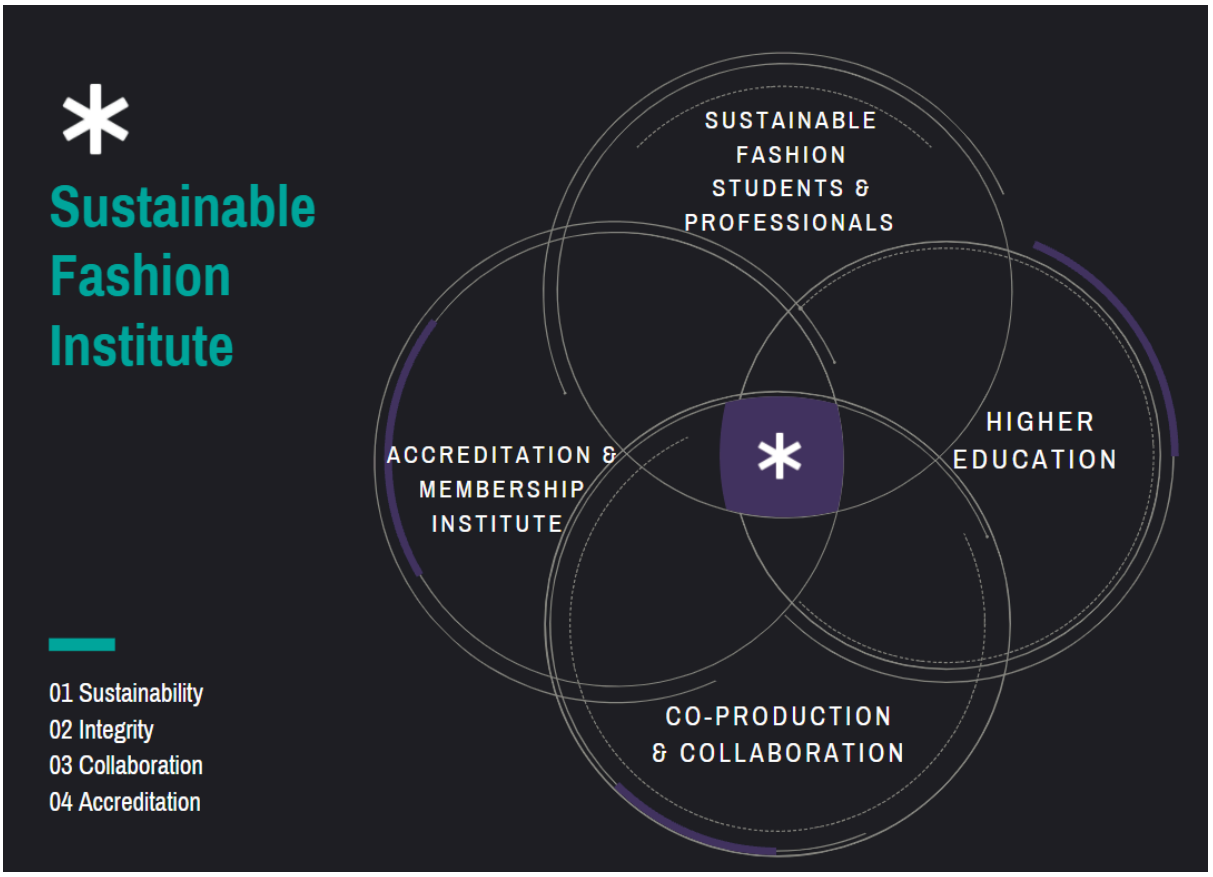

Figure 5. SFI Venn Diagram from the findings of the student groups

5. Chapter Five: Conclusion and Business Report

Chapter Introduction:

The following chapter concludes the findings and outlines the practical component of this business plan submission. It proposes the launch of the SFI and practical aspects of the business within the framework of a Lean Business Model Canvas (LBMC). Business Plan for Sustainable Fashion Institute. Additionally, it will address the limitations of the study, propose recommendations for future research, and outline the next steps for implementing the strategies developed throughout this dissertation.

5.1 Conclusion

As discussed within the literature, the fashion industry significantly impacts global environmental degradation and social injustice. The rise of fast fashion has led to widespread labour exploitation (Joy et al., 2012), extensive waste production (Niinimäki, 2013), and severe environmental pollution (Bick et al., 2018). These practices result in substantial textile waste and contribute to environmental harm through chemical contamination and depletion of resources (Allwood et al., 2006). Additionally, the fast fashion model, characterised by low costs and rapid turnover, exacerbates these problems by prioritising profit over sustainability and ethical labour standards (Cline, 2012; Perry, 2015). Many of these issues came up and were validated by the findings within the primary research. Specifically in many responses, the themes that emerged such as - Fashion educators report insufficient training resources and students express a need for more practical sustainability guidance. Contribute to the development of the business plan outlined in the next section.

Academic Recommendations from the literature review summarised in (Table 7) located within the literature review, which support the primary findings of this study are further developed below with the addition of the supporting analysis from the primary research summarised in the (Table 11) below.

Sustainability Education:

Academic Argument: The SFI can develop an academic curriculum that emphasises sustainable fashion practices. Hartz-Karp and Marinova (2017) argue that education plays a pivotal role in institutionalising sustainable development, making it a necessary component of any industry-led initiative.

Primary Research Findings: Participants in your study expressed a strong desire for sustainability to be embedded in the academic curriculum. Many highlighted the value of education that blends theoretical knowledge with practical applications in sustainable fashion, noting that this would better equip them for industry challenges.

This underpins the basis for the SFI's rationale to exist.

Accreditation Standards:

Academic Argument: By implementing accredited programs that follow globally recognised standards such as Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), the SFI can create a strong, trustworthy platform. Brügel (2016) and Shen et al. (2023) have shown that certifications like these provide credibility and help promote sustainable practices across industries.

Primary Research Findings: Participants consistently noted that having a sustainability accreditation would enhance their professional credibility. They felt that such a certification could help them stand out in the competitive fashion industry and create greater trust among employers.

The value proposition for SFI is developed from this knowledge.

Industry Collaboration:

Academic Argument: Collaborating with industry leaders ensures that the SFI remains relevant and practical. Elkington's (2018) research on sustainability collaborations suggests that partnerships between academia and industry are essential for achieving sustainability goals.

Primary Research Findings: Interviews with industry professionals revealed a

strong interest in partnerships with educational institutions like the SFI. Many industry experts emphasised that collaboration with students and academia through internships and joint projects is essential for developing innovative solutions to sustainability challenges in fashion.

Co-production needs to be at the heart of the SFI and is the basis of the ToC towards its conception.

Student Engagement:

Academic Argument: Engaging students through hands-on projects, internships, and real-world experiences is crucial. Fletcher (2014) found that real-world applications of sustainability enhance learning and empower students to drive systemic changes in their future careers.

Primary Research Findings: Participants indicated a preference for hands-on learning experiences, such as internships and collaborative projects, to better understand sustainability in fashion. They felt that practical exposure would deepen their understanding of sustainable practices and make the learning experience more relevant to real-world challenges.

The SFI needs to be more than an accreditation but a learning hub with projects.

Research & Development (R&D):

Academic Argument: R&D initiatives within the SFI can focus on creating new sustainable materials and innovations. As Sroufe (2017) points out, continuous research is essential for staying ahead in sustainability efforts and improving processes in the fashion industry.

Primary Research Findings: Several participants discussed the need for continued research and development in sustainable materials and technologies. They saw this as a critical area where SFI could collaborate with industry to push the boundaries of what's possible in sustainable fashion.

SFI could develop credibility with its research.

Global Outreach:

Academic Argument: Expanding a concept such as the SFI's accreditation programs internationally will help create a unified global standard for sustainability in fashion. Leisinger (2019) underscores the need for global engagement and cooperation in promoting sustainable development on a larger scale.

Primary Research Findings: There was notable support for the idea of expanding SFI's accreditation internationally. Participants from various backgrounds expressed that global recognition of the SFI accreditation would not only validate sustainable practices but also open up international opportunities in the fashion industry. However starting at a local or national level is the first step **There is a demand for consistency at a global level, however the SFI will start on a national level.**

Table 11. Literature and Primary research Discussion

5.1.1 Lean Business Model Canvas Overview of SFI

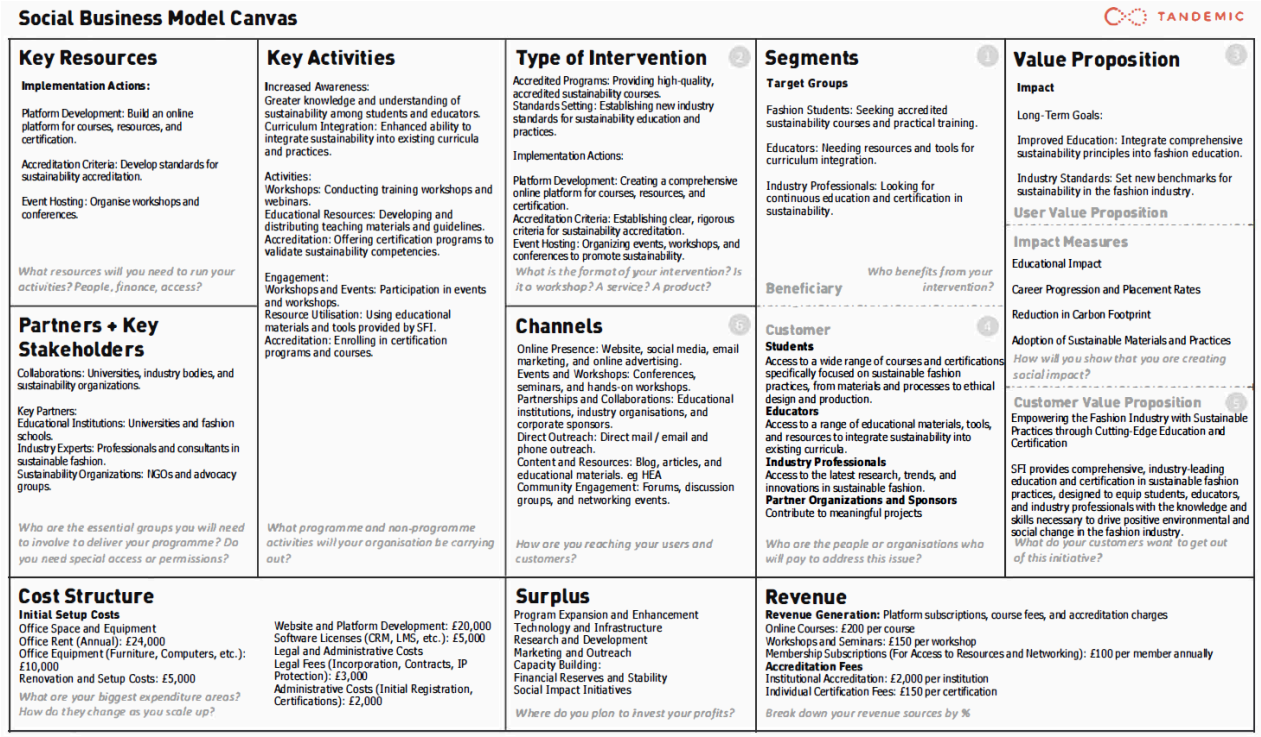

Figure 6. Social Business Model Canvas Applied to the SFI with a larger print version in the Appendices.

5.2 Introduction

5.2.1. Business Idea Background

The fashion industry is one of the largest contributors to global environmental degradation and social injustice. The demand for fast fashion has led to exploitative labour practices, massive waste generation, and pollution. In response to these challenges, there is a growing movement towards sustainable and ethical fashion

practices. The Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) aims to be a pioneer in this movement by providing education, resources, and support to individuals and businesses looking to transition to sustainable practices.

5.2.2 Purpose

The purpose of this business plan is to outline the strategic direction and operational framework for the Sustainable Fashion Institute. By providing a comprehensive overview of the institute's mission, objectives, target audience, services, and financial projections, this plan will serve as a roadmap for the successful launch and growth of the SFI.

5.2.3 Scope

The scope of the Sustainable Fashion Institute encompasses both educational and consultancy services aimed at promoting sustainability and ethics within the fashion industry. Key components of the institute's offerings include:

Membership Body Community Engagement: Developing a community of practice where industry professionals, academics, activists, and consumers can collaborate, share insights, and support each other in their journey towards sustainability.
Educational Programs: Developing and delivering courses, workshops, and seminars on sustainable fashion design, production, marketing, and consumption.
Research and Development: Conducting research projects to advance knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues within the fashion industry and develop innovative solutions. Looking towards research grants from the Arts Council
Consultancy Services: Providing tailored consultancy services to fashion brands, retailers, and suppliers seeking to adopt sustainable practices across their value chain.

Through these initiatives, the Sustainable Fashion Institute aims to catalyse positive change within the fashion industry, promote ethical consumption habits among consumers, and contribute to the overall sustainability agenda.

5.3 Vision, Mission and Goals

5.3.1 Mission Statement

The mission of the Sustainable Fashion Institute is to empower individuals and organisations within the fashion industry to embrace sustainable practices that prioritise environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic viability. Through education, consultancy, and community engagement, we strive to catalyse systemic change and create a culture of sustainability across the global fashion ecosystem.

5.3.2 Vision Statement

Our vision is a fashion industry that operates in harmony with nature, respects the rights and well-being of all people involved in the supply chain, and creates value for society as a whole. We envision a future where sustainable fashion is the norm rather than the exception, where creativity thrives within the boundaries of ecological and ethical principles, and where consumers make informed choices that reflect their values and aspirations.

5.3.3 Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives related to the mission and vision of the SFI

Educational Excellence: Develop and deliver high-quality educational programs that equip fashion professionals with the knowledge, skills, and mindset required to implement sustainable practices throughout the value chain.
Industry Leadership: Position the Sustainable Fashion Institute as a thought leader and catalyst for change within the fashion industry by conducting cutting-edge research, publishing insights, and advocating for policy reforms.
Impactful Consultancy: Provide practical guidance and support to education institutes, fashion brands, retailers, and suppliers seeking to transition to sustainable business models, thereby driving tangible improvements in environmental and social performance.
Community Building: Create a vibrant and inclusive community of sustainability champions, comprising industry professionals, academics, activists, and consumers, who collaborate, share best practices, and advocate for positive change that the SFI can bring.
Financial Sustainability: Achieve financial self-sufficiency for the SFI and long-term viability through diversified revenue streams, strategic partnerships, and efficient resource management.

It is hoped that by pursuing these goals and objectives, the Sustainable Fashion Institute aims to lead the transformation of the fashion industry towards a more sustainable and ethical future, where fashion is not only beautiful but also responsible and regenerative.

5.4 Market Analysis

5.4.1 Industry Overview

The fashion industry is a multi-billion-dollar global sector that encompasses the design, production, marketing, and distribution of clothing, accessories, and footwear. While traditionally focused on aesthetics and profitability, the industry is increasingly confronted with environmental and social challenges, such as resource depletion, pollution, and labour exploitation.

The shift towards sustainable fashion represents a significant opportunity for innovation and differentiation within the industry. Consumers are becoming more conscious of the impact of their purchasing decisions and are demanding greater transparency and accountability from brands. As a result, there is growing interest in sustainable materials, ethical production methods, and circular business models.

5.4.2 Target Market

The Sustainable Fashion Institute targets a diverse range of stakeholders within the fashion industry, including:

Academic institutions: Form a crucial part of the target market. Universities, colleges, and research institutions play a significant role in shaping the future of the fashion industry by educating the next generation of fashion professionals, conducting research on sustainability issues, and disseminating knowledge and best practices.
Fashion Students: Individuals seeking to integrate sustainability principles into their design process, fashion business management, fashion marketing, sourcing materials responsibly, and minimising waste.
Fashion Brands and Retailers: Companies interested in adopting sustainable practices across their operations, from supply chain management to marketing and distribution, can work with the accredited students and professionals.

Fashion Suppliers: Manufacturers, suppliers, and service providers looking to offer sustainable alternatives, such as eco-friendly fabrics, ethical manufacturing, and recycling solutions can work with the accredited students and professionals.
(Future Possibility) Consumers: Ethically-minded consumers who prioritise sustainability, transparency, and ethical production when making purchasing decisions.

5.4.3 Competitor Analysis

While there are numerous players in the sustainable fashion space, the competitive landscape can be segmented into several categories:

Other Educational Institutions: Universities, colleges, and online platforms offering courses and programs in sustainable fashion design, business, and marketing.
Consulting Firms: Specialised consultancy firms provide sustainability advisory services to fashion brands and retailers, helping them develop and implement sustainable strategies. Such as McKinsey or Deloitte
Non-Profit Organisations: NGOs and advocacy groups focused on promoting sustainable fashion through research, campaigns, and policy advocacy such as those listed within the competitor table below (DEAL, Fashion Revolution, and CISL)
Fashion Brands: Established and emerging fashion brands that have integrated sustainability into their brand identity and product offerings, serving as both competitors and potential collaborators such as Patagonia or Ganni who specialise in sustainable fashion are both thought leaders within the space.

The tables below are adapted from the previously shown competitor analysis in chapter 2. Utilising the SWOT analysis the conversion to a TOWS analysis links the strengths and weaknesses (table 12) then the opportunities and threats (table 13 in a strategic way) TOWS is especially useful for strategic planning, as it helps organisations align internal capabilities with external realities, creating more practical

and actionable plans (Weihrich, 1982). The focus on combining factors allows organisations to generate strategies that are grounded in both internal resources and the external environment, leading to more robust decision-making processes.

TOWS Matrix	**Strengths (S)**	**Weaknesses (W)**
Opportunities (O)	**SO Strategies**	**WO Strategies**
Partnership Potential (DEAL, SFI): Collaborating with fashion-focused organisations to integrate Doughnut Economics.	- Leverage DEAL's global reach, SFI's membership platform, and innovative framework to partner with fashion organisations like Fashion Revolution and CISL, expanding into fashion-specific sustainability.	- Address DEAL's sector specificity by partnering with **SFI** and fashion organisations to develop industry-specific sustainability solutions, integrating SFI's accreditation into the broader Doughnut model.
Growing Interest in Sustainable Models (DEAL, SFI): Increasing global interest in sustainable, regenerative economic models.	- Use SFI's membership platform to collaborate with **Fashion Revolution**, DEAL, and **Fashion Roundtable** to amplify the adoption of sustainable and regenerative economic models in the fashion sector.	- SFI and CISL can develop sector-specific programs focused on fashion, addressing the growing interest in sustainable leadership and leveraging the SFI's accreditation system to promote sustainability standards.
Expanding Reach (Fashion Roundtable, SFI): Collaborating with international stakeholders to broaden influence.	- Fashion Roundtable and SFI can jointly work on expanding their influence by partnering with DEAL and CISL to drive sustainability initiatives internationally. This could also involve offering **SFI's accreditation** to institutions globally.	- SFI can partner with **DEAL** and **Fashion Roundtable** to develop a global accreditation program for fashion, helping address DEAL's complexity in reaching specific sectors and improving international strategy.
Educational Initiatives (Fashion Revolution, SFI): Expanding educational programs to drive awareness among stakeholders.	- Fashion Revolution can work with **SFI** to incorporate their membership and accreditation platform into broader educational initiatives, offering practical resources and academic backing from CISL.	- Fashion Revolution and **SFI** can collaborate with CISL and Fashion Roundtable to expand educational offerings, integrating sustainability leadership and policy education into SFI's platform.

Table 12. TOWS strengths and weaknesses

TOWS Matrix	Threats (T)	Weaknesses (W)
Industry Resistance (Fashion Revolution, SFI): Entrenched practices within the fashion industry resist change.	**ST Strategies**: - Fashion Revolution, SFI, and Fashion Roundtable can collaborate to address industry resistance by offering **SFI's accreditation** as a tangible solution for brands wanting to showcase sustainable practices. This partnership can combine policy advocacy with grassroots campaigns and educational outreach.	**WT Strategies**: - SFI and Fashion Revolution could address the saturation of advocacy campaigns by creating targeted, policy-focused efforts, with support from Fashion Roundtable and CISL to generate actionable changes in the industry.
Complex Implementation (DEAL, SFI): Implementing the Doughnut Economics model may face challenges due to its complexity.	- DEAL and **SFI** can simplify the implementation of the Doughnut model for fashion by incorporating **SFI's accreditation system**, providing a structured approach to validating sustainable practices in the industry.	- DEAL and SFI should collaborate with CISL and Fashion Roundtable to address the complexity of applying the Doughnut framework, offering sector-specific solutions through the SFI's tailored accreditation and membership system.
Policy Implementation Gaps (Fashion Roundtable, SFI): Difficulties in translating policy recommendations into action.	- Fashion Roundtable, in partnership with **SFI**, can use their combined expertise to bridge the gap between policy recommendations and industry practice. SFI's **accreditation** can serve as a practical tool for fashion brands to meet these policy standards.	- To tackle policy implementation challenges, **SFI** and Fashion Roundtable could partner with Fashion Revolution to create consumer-driven campaigns and encourage brands to adopt sustainable practices through the SFI's certification process.

Table 13. TOWS opportunities and threats

5.4.4 TOWS Competitor Strategy

Key TOWS Competitor Strategy Recommendations with SFI Integration or recommendations

1. **SO Strategies (Strengths + Opportunities)**:
    - **SFI** can collaborate with **DEAL**, **Fashion Revolution**, and **CISL** to incorporate the Doughnut Economics model into its **accreditation** platform, ensuring fashion industry-specific sustainability initiatives

that are globally relevant.
    - **Fashion Roundtable** and **SFI** can work together to create global outreach programs, offering **SFI's accreditation** to institutions and brands worldwide, thereby expanding both organisations' reach and promoting sustainable development internationally.
    - **SFI** can enhance educational programs by partnering with **Fashion Revolution** and **CISL**, offering members access to robust sustainability education linked to their **accreditation system**.
2. **WO Strategies (Weaknesses + Opportunities)**:
    - **SFI** can address the broad focus of **DEAL** by integrating **fashion-specific accreditation** into the Doughnut model, providing an actionable and structured approach for the fashion sector.
    - By collaborating with **CISL**, **SFI** can develop sector-specific leadership programs, utilising **SFI's accreditation** as a tool to educate and engage fashion brands on sustainable practices.
    - **SFI** can further enhance its educational reach by collaborating with **Fashion Revolution** and **Fashion Roundtable**, using **SFI's accreditation** to offer more targeted learning opportunities for fashion students and professionals.
3. **ST Strategies (Strengths + Threats)**:
    - **SFI** can work with **Fashion Revolution** and **Fashion Roundtable** to tackle resistance in the fashion industry by offering **SFI's sustainability accreditation** as a tangible solution, supported by policy advocacy and grassroots engagement.
    - **DEAL** and **SFI** can collaborate to simplify the Doughnut model's implementation within the fashion industry, using **SFI's structured accreditation system** to provide actionable steps for fashion brands to adopt regenerative practices.
    - **Fashion Roundtable** and **SFI** can jointly address policy gaps by offering **SFI's accreditation** as a tool for brands to meet sustainability regulations, ensuring that policy recommendations translate into practice.
4. **WT Strategies (Weaknesses + Threats)**:
    - **SFI** and **Fashion Revolution** can create more focused, policy-driven campaigns to combat industry resistance and campaign saturation, using **SFI's accreditation system** to offer practical pathways for brands to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability.
    - **SFI**, in partnership with **DEAL** and **Fashion Roundtable**, can address the complexity of implementing broader sustainability frameworks like the Doughnut Economics model by offering **industry-specific accreditation** solutions that streamline the process for fashion brands.
    - **SFI** and **Fashion Roundtable** can work together to promote **SFI's accreditation** through consumer-focused campaigns, driving industry change from both a policy and market demand perspective.

Table 14. Key TOWS Competitor Strategy Recommendations with SFI integration or partnerships

5.5 Sustainable Fashion Institute Model

5.5.1 Theory of Change

Theory of Change Top Level Overview

The Theory of Change (ToC) underlying the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) revolves around the belief that education, collaboration, and empowerment can drive systemic change within the fashion industry towards sustainability and ethics this was developed with the utilisation of the primary findings from this business dissertation in collaboration with the potential stakeholders of SFI. The ToC for SFI is as follows:

Assumptions: SFI assumes that by providing comprehensive education, consultancy services, and developing a collaborative and supportive community, individuals and organisations within the fashion industry can be empowered to adopt sustainable practices.
Outcomes: The ultimate outcome envisioned by SFI is a fashion industry that operates in harmony with the environment, respects the rights and well-being of all stakeholders, and creates value for society. This includes reduced environmental impact, improved working conditions, and increased transparency and accountability throughout the supply chain.
Pathways of Change: SFI identifies several pathways through which change can occur, including: ● Education and Awareness: Providing knowledge and resources to equip fashion professionals with the skills and mindset needed to implement sustainable practices. ● Collaboration and Partnership: Facilitating collaboration and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders to leverage collective expertise and resources. ● Advocacy and Influence: Advocating for policy reforms, industry standards, and consumer awareness campaigns to drive broader systemic change.
Interventions: SFI implements interventions such as educational programs, consultancy services, research projects, and community-building initiatives to catalyse change along these pathways.
Assumptions about Context: SFI acknowledges the dynamic and complex nature of the fashion industry, including political, economic, social, and cultural factors. It adapts its strategies and interventions in response to changing contexts and emerging challenges.
Learning and Adaptation: SFI emphasises continuous learning and adaptation, incorporating feedback from stakeholders, monitoring progress, and adjusting strategies as needed to maximise impact and effectiveness.

5.5.2 Key Principles

The key principles guiding the Sustainable Fashion Institute model include:

Holistic Approach: SFI adopts a holistic approach that considers the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability within the fashion industry. It aims not to judge and know that the members are on the path one step at a time.
Collaboration and Partnership: SFI values collaboration and partnership as essential drivers of change, developing connections among diverse stakeholders to leverage collective expertise and resources.
Innovation and Creativity: SFI encourages innovation and creativity in sustainable fashion practices, promoting new ideas, technologies, and business models that challenge conventional norms and inspire positive change.
Transparency and Accountability: SFI advocates for transparency and accountability throughout the fashion supply chain, promoting ethical practices, traceability, and responsible consumption.
Empowerment and Inclusivity: SFI prioritises empowerment and inclusivity, striving to create a supportive and inclusive environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds can participate, contribute, and thrive.

5.5.3 Implementation Strategy

The implementation strategy of the Sustainable Fashion Institute involves the following components:

Educational Programs: Developing and delivering comprehensive educational programs, courses, and workshops on sustainable fashion design, production, marketing, and consumption.
Community Engagement: Creating a vibrant and inclusive community of practice where industry professionals, academics, activists, and consumers can collaborate, share insights, and support each other in their journey towards sustainability.
Research and Development: Conducting research projects to advance knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues within the fashion industry, develop innovative solutions, and inform evidence-based decision-making.

Consultancy Services: Providing tailored consultancy services to fashion brands, retailers, and suppliers seeking to adopt sustainable practices across their value chain, including supply chain optimisation, material sourcing, and certification.

By implementing these strategies in alignment with the Theory of Change and key principles, the Sustainable Fashion Institute aims to drive meaningful and lasting change within the fashion industry towards a more sustainable and ethical future.

5.6 Organisational Structure

5.6.1 Leadership Team

The leadership team of the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) consists of experienced professionals with a deep commitment to sustainability and expertise in various aspects of the fashion industry. Key members of the leadership team include:

Executive Director: The Executive Director provides strategic direction and overall leadership for SFI. They oversee the institute's operations, manage partnerships, and represent SFI in external engagements.
Director of Education: The Director of Education is responsible for developing and overseeing the educational programs offered by SFI. They collaborate with industry experts and academic partners to design curriculum, recruit instructors, and ensure the quality and relevance of educational offerings.
Director of Consultancy Services: The Director of Consultancy Services leads the consultancy arm of SFI, working closely with clients to understand their sustainability needs, develop tailored solutions, and oversee project delivery. They also manage a team of consultants and experts.
Director of Research and Development: The Director of Research and Development leads SFI's research initiatives, identifying key sustainability challenges facing the fashion industry, conducting research projects, and disseminating findings through publications and conferences.

5.6.2 Staff Roles and Responsibilities

SFI's staff members play critical roles in supporting the institute's mission and operations. Staff roles and responsibilities may include:

Program Managers: Program managers oversee the development, implementation, and evaluation of specific educational programs or initiatives within SFI. They coordinate with instructors, manage logistics, and ensure program effectiveness.
Consultants: Consultants provide expertise and guidance to fashion brands, retailers, and suppliers seeking to adopt sustainable practices. They conduct assessments, develop strategies, and support clients in implementing sustainability initiatives.
Researchers: Researchers conduct empirical studies, literature reviews, and data analysis to advance knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues within the fashion industry. They contribute to research projects, publications, and thought leadership activities.
Administrative Staff: Administrative staff members provide essential support functions, including finance, human resources, marketing, and operations. They ensure smooth day-to-day operations and facilitate communication and coordination within the organisation.

5.6.3 Advisory Board

The Advisory Board of SFI comprises respected leaders and experts from the fashion industry, academia, and sustainability field. The Advisory Board provides strategic guidance, industry insights, and networking opportunities to support SFI's mission and goals. Responsibilities of the Advisory Board may include:

- Providing advice and counsel to the leadership team on strategic direction, program development, and partnership opportunities.
- Offering industry expertise and insights to inform SFI's educational programs, consultancy services, and research initiatives.
- Facilitating connections and collaborations with industry stakeholders, including fashion brands, retailers, NGOs, and government agencies.
- Advocating for SFI's mission and raising awareness of sustainable fashion issues within their respective networks and communities.

Ideal Advisory board members would include

5.6.4 Operational Plan

The operational plan for the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) outlines the key activities, resources, timelines, and processes necessary for the institute’s effective operation and growth. Below is a structured operational plan that includes the essential components for launching and running the SFI:

Objective: To establish and operate the SFI as a leading membership platform offering sustainability accreditation to fashion students and professionals in the UK, facilitating connectivity, credibility, and benchmarking.

Key Activities

1. Platform Development

- ☐ Action: Design and develop the SFI online platform.
- ☐ Timeline: 6 months.
- ☐ Responsible: Outsourced IT Team, Web Developers.
- ☐ Resources Needed:Budget for development, technical expertise, design software.

2. Accreditation Criteria Creation

- ☐ Action: Develop and finalise sustainability accreditation criteria and standards.
- ☐ Timeline: 3 months.
- ☐ Responsible: Academic Advisory Board, Sustainability Experts (utilise the student collaborative challenge input.
- ☐ Resources Needed: Research materials, expert consultations.

3. Course and Resource Development

- ☐ Action: Create educational content, training modules, and resources for members.
- ☐ Timeline: 4 months.
- ☐ Responsible: Content Developers, Subject Matter Experts.
- ☐ Resources Needed: Educational tools, content creators.

4. Marketing and Outreach

- ☐ Action: Develop and implement a marketing strategy to attract members.
- ☐ Timeline: 3 months leading up to launch.
- ☐ Responsible: Marketing Team, PR Specialists.
- ☐ Resources Needed: Marketing budget, promotional materials, social media platforms.

5. Membership Enrollment

- ☐ Action: Launch membership registration and onboard initial members.
- ☐ Timeline: 1 month post-launch.
- ☐ Responsible: Membership Coordinator, Customer Service Team.
- ☐ Resources Needed:Membership management system, support staff.

6. Event Organisation

- ☐ Action: Organise workshops, seminars, and networking events for members.
- ☐ Timeline: Ongoing, starting 2 months after launch.
- ☐ Responsible: Event Planner, Networking Coordinator.
- ☐ Resources Needed: Event venues, speakers, logistics support.

7. Feedback and Improvement

- ☐ Action: Collect and analyse feedback from members to refine services.
- ☐ Timeline: Ongoing.
- ☐ Responsible: Feedback Analyst, Quality Assurance Team.
- ☐ Resources Needed: Survey tools, feedback management system.

Top Level overview of Resources and Budget

1. Personnel

Roles: Platform Developers, Content Creators, Marketing Specialists, Customer Service Representatives.

Requirements: Expertise in relevant fields, hiring budget.

2. Financial Resources

Start-up Costs: Platform development, initial marketing, accreditation setup.

Operational Costs: Salaries, ongoing marketing, event expenses.

Revenue Streams: Membership fees, sponsorships, partnerships.

3. Technology and Tools

Platform: Web hosting, membership management system, content management system.

Marketing: Social media tools, email marketing software, analytics tools.

4. Timeline

Activity	Start Date	End Date	Duration
Platform development	September 2024	February 2025	6 months
Accreditation Criteria Development	September 2024	November 2024	3 months
Course and Resource Development	October 2024	February 2025	4 months
Marketing and Outreach	January 2025	April 2025	3 months
Membership Enrolment	April 2025	April 2025	1 month
Event Organisation	May 2025	Ongoing	Ongoing
Feedback & Improvement	May 2025	Ongoing	Ongoing

5. Risk Management 1.Technical Risks Mitigation: Regular updates, cybersecurity measures, and technical support. 2. Financial Risks Mitigation: Detailed financial planning, diverse revenue streams, and regular budget reviews. 3. Market Risks Mitigation: Ongoing market research, flexible marketing strategies, and adapting to feedback. 4. Operational Risks Mitigation: Efficient project management, clear communication channels, and contingency planning.
6. Evaluation and Metrics 1. Performance Metrics Membership Growth: Number of new members, membership retention rate. Engagement Levels: Participation in courses, events, and workshops. Financial Health: Revenue vs. expenses, profitability margins. 2. Review Process Frequency: Quarterly reviews and annual assessments. Responsible: Management Team, Financial Analysts.

This top level operational plan outlines the key components required to successfully launch and manage the Sustainable Fashion Institute, given the suggestion from some of the collaborative students, ensuring that aspects from development to implementation are addressed comprehensively.

5.7 Programs and Services

5.7.1 Education and Training

The Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) offers a range of educational programs and training opportunities designed to equip individuals and organisations with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to advance sustainability within the fashion industry. These programs may include:

Certificate Programs: SFI offers certificate programs in sustainable fashion design, production, marketing, and business management. These programs provide comprehensive training on sustainable practices, ethical sourcing, and circular design principles.
Workshops and Seminars: SFI conducts workshops and seminars on specific topics within sustainable fashion, such as eco-friendly materials, supply chain transparency, and responsible consumption. These events feature industry experts, case studies, and hands-on activities.
Online Courses: SFI provides online courses and webinars accessible to a global audience. These courses cover a wide range of sustainability topics relevant to the fashion industry, allowing participants to learn at their own pace and convenience.
Customised Training: SFI offers customised training programs tailored to the specific needs and priorities of fashion brands, retailers, and suppliers. These programs may include onsite workshops, executive education sessions, and capacity-building initiatives.

5.7.2 Research and Development

SFI will aim to conduct research and development (R&D) projects to advance knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues within the fashion industry and develop innovative solutions. Key components of SFI's R&D efforts include:

Applied Research: SFI conducts empirical studies, literature reviews, and data analysis to identify key sustainability challenges and opportunities within the fashion industry. Research findings inform evidence-based decision-making and industry best practices.
Innovation Projects: SFI collaborates with industry partners, academic institutions, and technology providers to develop innovative solutions that address sustainability challenges, such as sustainable materials, production techniques, and business models.
Publication and Dissemination: SFI publishes research findings, white papers, and reports to share insights and knowledge with the broader fashion community. These publications contribute to thought leadership, industry discourse, and policy advocacy.

5.7.3 Consulting and Collaboration

SFI could explore in the future with consultancy services and collaborates with fashion brands, retailers, and suppliers to drive sustainable innovation and transformation across the industry. Future consulting and collaboration services offered by SFI include:

Sustainability Assessments: SFI conducts sustainability assessments to evaluate the environmental and social performance of fashion companies, identify areas for improvement, and develop tailored action plans. This could be in partnership with B Corp.
Strategic Planning: SFI assists clients in developing and implementing sustainability strategies aligned with their business goals and values. This may include setting sustainability targets, integrating sustainability into business processes, and stakeholder engagement. This could be utilising frameworks and other companies such as Climate Fresk.
Supply Chain Optimisation: SFI helps companies optimise their supply chains for sustainability, including sourcing of sustainable materials, ethical manufacturing practices, and supply chain transparency. This would be possible through a partnership with CISL and utilising the SVAT model.
Partnership Development: SFI facilitates collaborations and partnerships between industry stakeholders, including fashion brands, suppliers, NGOs, and academic institutions. These partnerships leverage collective expertise and resources to drive systemic change within the industry.

5.8 Marketing and Promotion

5.8.1 Branding Strategy

The branding strategy of the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) focuses on positioning the institute as a trusted authority and leader in sustainable fashion education, consultancy, and research. Key components of SFI's branding strategy include:

Visionary Messaging: SFI communicates a compelling vision of a fashion industry that operates in harmony with the environment and respects the rights and well-being of all stakeholders. Messaging emphasises SFI's commitment to sustainability, innovation, and positive impact.
Authenticity and Integrity: SFI's branding emphasises authenticity, transparency, and integrity. The institute aligns its branding with its core values and principles, ensuring consistency across all communication channels.
Thought Leadership: SFI positions itself as a thought leader in the field of sustainable fashion, sharing insights, research findings, and best practices through publications, presentations, and media engagements. Thought leadership activities help build credibility and establish SFI as a trusted source of expertise.

Visual Identity: SFI's visual identity reflects its commitment to sustainability and innovation. The institute's logo, colour palette, and design elements convey professionalism, creativity, and environmental consciousness.

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5.8.2 Advertising and Public Relations

SFI employs advertising and public relations (PR) strategies to raise awareness, build brand recognition, and engage with key stakeholders in the fashion industry and beyond. Advertising and PR initiatives include:

Media Partnerships: SFI collaborates with media outlets, industry publications, and influencers to amplify its message and reach a wider audience. Media partnerships may involve sponsored content, interviews, and feature articles highlighting SFI's work and impact.
Press Releases and Media Outreach: SFI issues press releases and conducts media outreach to announce new initiatives, research findings, and partnerships. Media coverage helps generate publicity and establish SFI as a thought leader in sustainable fashion.
Events and Conferences: SFI participates in industry events, conferences, and trade shows to showcase its expertise, network with industry professionals, and engage with potential clients and partners. SFI may host its own events or participate as a speaker or exhibitor at external events.
Social Responsibility Campaigns: SFI launches social responsibility campaigns to raise awareness of pressing sustainability issues within the fashion industry and mobilise collective action. Campaigns may leverage social media, online petitions, and community events to drive engagement and advocacy.

5.8.3 Digital Marketing Initiatives

SFI leverages digital marketing channels and platforms to reach its target audience, engage with stakeholders, and promote its programs and services. Digital marketing initiatives include:

Website and Blog: SFI maintains a professional website and blog featuring informative content, resources, and updates on sustainable fashion trends, research, and events. The website serves as a central hub for information and a gateway for prospective students, clients, and partners.
Social Media Presence: SFI actively engages with its audience on social media platforms, including LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Social media channels

are used to share educational content, industry news, success stories, and event announcements, as well as to facilitate conversations and community building.
Email Marketing: SFI utilises email marketing campaigns to communicate with subscribers, share updates and announcements, promote upcoming events and courses, and nurture leads. Email newsletters may include curated content, case studies, testimonials, and special offers to encourage engagement and conversions.
Search Engine Optimisation (SEO): SFI optimises its website and content for search engines to improve visibility and attract organic traffic. SEO strategies may include keyword research, content optimisation, link building, and local SEO tactics to ensure SFI ranks prominently in search engine results pages.

5.9. Financial Projections

5.9.1 Revenue Forecast

The revenue forecast for the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) is based on various revenue streams generated from educational programs, consultancy services, research projects, and partnerships. Revenue projections may include:

Membership Fees: Revenue generated from membership fees and tuition for educational programs, including certificate courses, workshops, and online courses. Tuition fees are calculated based on enrollment numbers, course duration, and pricing structure.
Consultancy Fees: Revenue generated from consultancy services provided to fashion brands, retailers, and suppliers seeking sustainability advice and support. Consultancy fees may be charged on a project basis, hourly rate, or retainer agreement.
Research Grants and Contracts: Revenue generated from research grants, contracts, and funding opportunities to support research and development projects. Research revenue may vary depending on the scope, duration, and funding sources of individual projects.
Partnership Revenue: Revenue generated from strategic partnerships, collaborations, and sponsorship agreements with industry partners, academic institutions, NGOs, and government agencies. Partnership revenue may include sponsorship fees, licensing agreements, and revenue-sharing arrangements.
Miscellaneous Revenue: Additional revenue sources may include revenue from merchandise sales, event ticket sales, advertising, and affiliate partnerships.

5.9.2 Cost Analysis

The cost analysis for SFI involves identifying and estimating various operating expenses associated with running the institute and delivering its programs and services. Key cost categories may include:

Personnel Costs: Salaries, wages, benefits, and other personnel-related expenses for staff members, instructors, consultants, and administrative personnel.
Facilities and Equipment: Rent, utilities, maintenance, and depreciation expenses for office space, classrooms, laboratories, and equipment used for educational and research activities. **Marketing and Promotion:** Costs associated with advertising, public relations, digital marketing, and promotional campaigns to raise awareness and attract students, clients, and partners.
Professional Services: Fees paid to external consultants, legal advisors, accounting firms, and other professional service providers for specialised expertise and support.
Research and Development: Costs associated with conducting research projects, including personnel costs, equipment, materials, travel, and other project-related expenses
Technology and Software: Costs for software licences, subscriptions, and IT infrastructure to support educational delivery, research activities, and administrative functions
Administrative Overhead: General administrative expenses, including office supplies, insurance, professional memberships, and other miscellaneous costs.

5.9.3 Funding and Investment Strategy

SFI's funding and investment strategy may involve a combination of revenue generation, grants, donations, sponsorships, and strategic partnerships to support its operations and growth initiatives. Key components of SFI's funding and investment strategy may include:

Diversified Revenue Streams: SFI seeks to diversify its revenue streams to reduce reliance on any single source of funding. This may include expanding its portfolio of educational programs, consultancy services, and research projects, as well as exploring new revenue opportunities.
Grant Funding: SFI actively pursues grant funding opportunities from government agencies, foundations, and philanthropic organisations to support its research and development activities. Grant funding may provide financial support for specific projects or initiatives aligned with SFI's mission and goals.

Donations and Sponsorships: SFI solicits donations and sponsorships from individuals, corporations, and other organisations that share its commitment to sustainable fashion. Donations may support scholarships, research grants, and other initiatives, while sponsorships may provide funding for events, conferences, and marketing campaigns.
Strategic Partnerships: SFI forms strategic partnerships and collaborations with industry partners, academic institutions, NGOs, and government agencies to leverage resources, expertise, and networks. Strategic partnerships may involve joint research projects, co-sponsored events, or revenue-sharing agreements that generate funding and support for SFI's activities.
Investment in Growth Initiatives: SFI invests in strategic growth initiatives that have the potential to generate long-term impact and financial sustainability. This may include expanding its educational offerings, scaling up consultancy services, and investing in infrastructure, technology, and talent development to support organisational growth and innovation.

5.10 Risk Management

5.10.1 Identification of Risks

Risk identification is crucial for the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) to anticipate potential challenges that could impact its operations, finances, and reputation. Key risks may include:

Market Risk: Fluctuations in demand for sustainable fashion education and consultancy services due to changes in market trends, economic conditions, or competitive dynamics.
Regulatory Risk: Changes in regulations, policies, or industry standards related to sustainability, education, or business operations that could impact SFI's compliance requirements and operating environment.
Financial Risk: Financial risks such as revenue shortfalls, cost overruns, budget constraints, or funding uncertainties that could affect SFI's financial stability and sustainability.
Reputation Risk: Negative publicity, stakeholder backlash, or damage to SFI's reputation due to issues such as ethical misconduct, academic integrity, or conflicts of interest.
Operational Risk: Operational challenges such as technology failures, supply chain disruptions, staffing issues, or organisational inefficiencies that could hinder SFI's ability to deliver programs and services effectively.
Cybersecurity Risk: Data breaches, cyberattacks, or information security vulnerabilities that could compromise the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of SFI's sensitive information and systems.

5.10.2 Risk Mitigation Strategies

To mitigate identified risks, SFI may implement various strategies and controls to reduce their likelihood and impact. Risk mitigation strategies may include:

Diversification: Diversifying revenue streams, client base, and funding sources to reduce dependence on any single source of income or partnership.
Compliance and Monitoring: Monitoring regulatory developments, industry standards, and best practices to ensure compliance and proactively address emerging risks.
Financial Planning and Contingency Reserves: Implementing robust financial planning processes, budgeting techniques, and contingency reserves to buffer against financial uncertainties and unexpected expenses.
Reputation Management: Establishing clear ethical guidelines, communication protocols, and stakeholder engagement strategies to manage reputation risks and address issues promptly and transparently.
Operational Efficiency: Implementing process improvements, automation, and risk controls to enhance operational efficiency, resilience, and adaptability to changing circumstances.
Cybersecurity Measures: Implementing cybersecurity measures such as encryption, access controls, intrusion detection systems, and employee training to protect sensitive data and mitigate cybersecurity risks.

5.10.3 Contingency Plans

In addition to risk mitigation strategies, SFI develops contingency plans to respond effectively to unforeseen events or crises that may occur despite risk mitigation efforts. Contingency plans may include:

Business Continuity Planning: Developing procedures and protocols to ensure the continuity of essential operations and services during disruptions such as natural disasters, pandemics, or technology failures.
Crisis Communication: Establishing communication plans and protocols to facilitate timely and transparent communication with stakeholders during crises, including designated spokespersons, communication channels, and messaging frameworks.
Resource Allocation: Identifying alternative resources, backup suppliers, and emergency funding sources to address staff resource shortages or disruptions.

Scenario Planning: Conducting scenario planning exercises to anticipate potential risks and develop response strategies for various scenarios, including best-case, worst-case, and most likely outcomes.
Recovery and Resilience: Implementing measures to facilitate recovery and resilience following a crisis, including post-incident assessments, lessons learned, and continuous improvement initiatives to strengthen organisational resilience over time.

5.11 Monitoring and Evaluation, then looking forwards

5.11.1 Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are metrics used by the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) to assess the effectiveness and impact of its programs, services, and operations. KPIs are aligned with SFI's mission, goals, and strategic objectives and may include:

Enrollment and Participation Rates: Number of students enrolled in educational programs, workshops, and courses, as well as participation rates in events, webinars, and community activities.
Client Satisfaction: Client feedback and satisfaction ratings based on surveys, interviews, and testimonials regarding the quality, relevance, and impact of consultancy services and training programs.
Revenue Growth: Revenue generated from tuition fees, consultancy services, research grants, partnerships, and other sources, compared to targets and historical performance.
Research Outputs: Number of research projects initiated, publications produced, presentations delivered, and citations received by SFI faculty and researchers in peer-reviewed journals and conferences.
Partnership Engagement: Number of strategic partnerships established, collaborations initiated, and joint initiatives undertaken with industry partners, academic institutions, NGOs, and government agencies.

5.11.2 Looking forwards; Continuous Improvement Process

As to conclude the business plan it is important to factor in continuous improvement. Continuous improvement will be integral to SFI's commitment to excellence, innovation, and impact within sustainable fashion. SFI will employ a systematic approach to continuous improvement, which includes:

Feedback Mechanisms:	Continuous soliciting feedback from students, clients, partners, and stakeholders through surveys, evaluations, focus groups, and consultations to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.
Performance Reviews:	Conducting regular performance reviews and evaluations of programs, services, and staff members to assess effectiveness, identify bottlenecks, and implement corrective actions.
Learning and Adaptation:	Incorporating lessons learned, best practices, and feedback into program design, delivery, and refinement to enhance relevance, responsiveness, and impact over time.
Professional Development:	Investing in professional development opportunities for staff members, instructors, and consultants to enhance their skills, knowledge, and capabilities in sustainable fashion education, consultancy, and research.
Strategic Planning:	Conducting periodic strategic planning exercises to review organisational goals, priorities, and strategies in light of changing external conditions, emerging trends, and stakeholder needs. This ensures alignment with SFI's mission and vision while creating agility and resilience in response to evolving challenges and opportunities.

5.12 Further Research

Given the findings of this study and the increasing importance of sustainability within the fashion industry, a follow-up research question could explore:

"How can the implementation of sustainability accreditation programs in the fashion industry be scaled globally, and what are the key factors influencing their adoption across different cultural, economic, and regulatory environments?"

This question opens up further research opportunities to investigate how the accreditation models developed in this study can be adapted and implemented in diverse global contexts, addressing the challenges and opportunities faced by fashion industries worldwide in their sustainability efforts.

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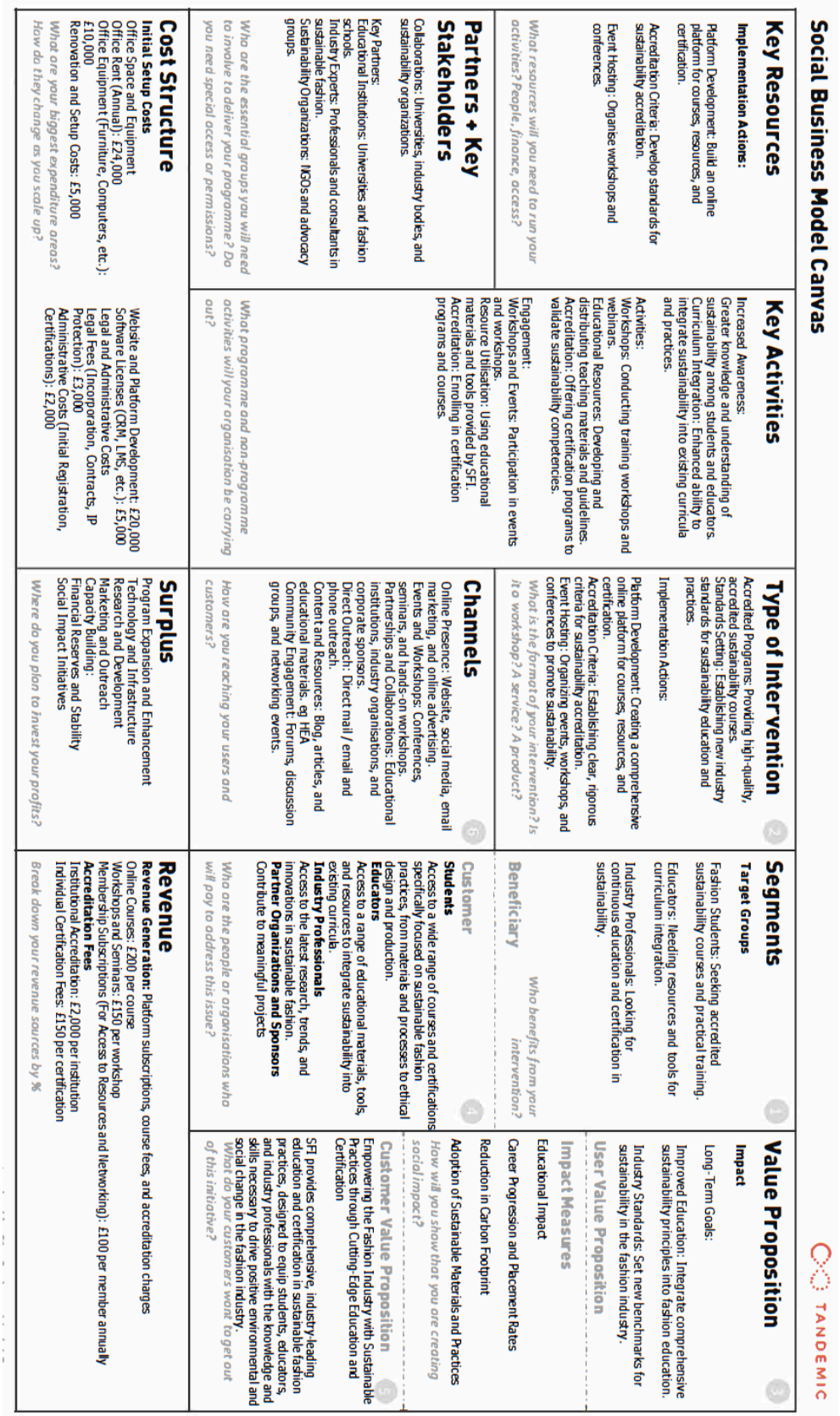
Appendices

1.1 Sustainable Fashion Institute - Social Business Model Canvas



2.1 Thematic Analysis of Interview with participant HM at LCF

Codes and Themes:

Accreditation and Membership Initiatives	- LCF's proactive approach to seeking accreditations or memberships. - Challenges encountered with UAL lawyers during the accreditation process. - Selection criteria for choosing institutes or membership bodies for accreditation.
Course-Specific Strategies	- Focus on undergraduate courses for initial accreditations. - Strategic decisions regarding which courses to target for accreditation, such as fashion marketing and visual merchandising. - Development of new accreditations to fill existing gaps, particularly in sustainability.
Financial Considerations	- Discussion on the cost per student for various accreditations. - Institutional coverage of student membership costs. - Financial strategies for managing accreditation fees and student memberships.
Student Engagement and Value	- Importance of accreditation for enhancing student CVs and professional recognition. - Student feedback on the value of accreditations, emphasising professional recognition over educational resources. - The role of digital certificates in increasing student recognition and value.
Sustainability in Education	- Exploration of options for sustainability-focused accreditation. - The gap in current accreditations regarding sustainability. - Potential for incorporating sustainability into course accreditations and student projects.
Operational and Strategic Planning	- Renewal processes for existing contracts and accreditations. - The necessity of clear communication strategies about the benefits of accreditation to students. - Planning for future meetings and discussions to review progress and next steps.
Professional Networking and Resources	- The impact of professional networking through memberships and accreditations.

	- Utilisation of resources from accrediting bodies and membership organisations. - The significance of associations like SBC and the Textile Institute in providing resources and networking opportunities.
Quality Assurance and Regulatory Bodies	- Complexities surrounding PSRBs and QA in the accreditation process. - The challenge of finding clear information on PSRBs and QA standards. - Considerations for aligning courses with external standards and criteria.

2.1.2 Full Transcript with HM at LCF

Speaker 1
Right. Can you give me an overview of how institutes and all membership bodies start, contracting with you at LCF?

Speaker 2
I think it's different for each one. what comes to mind immediately is we've got this, membership of the Charter Association of Business Schools. And we recently got the small business charter accreditation, but I'm not directly involved, but I know that it's been a real headache getting the contract sorted out for the help to grow management.
I believe it's been sorted out now, and I think most of the kind of headache was actually from the UAL lawyers not to do with the small business charter side of things. but I I don't know the details of it. but I suppose that one's a bit unusual and regarding the other memberships we've got, it has been our initiative to approach them. It's not them coming to us and saying, Look, we can accredit your courses or we can, you know, why don't you join our membership?
generally, it's been us seeking, approval or endorsement or acknowledgement or accreditation from, an appropriate body, depending on whether it's school wide or, course specific. Well, I think I'm drifting. What was the question again? Exactly.

Speaker 1
Can you give me an overview of how institutes on membership bodies start contracting with you? And you said it was You approached them. And what's your selection criteria, then? Is it sorry? Yeah. What is your Why? Why? Why would that be?

Speaker 2
Well, if it's to do with an accreditation, we focused on undergraduate courses to start with because they are bread and butter. When we first started doing accreditations, we were still growing the graduate school. And in some respects, if you look at it as a kind of recruitment aid, you know a good thing to have on the course web page?
It kind of made sense to target the undergraduate courses first. So we looked at our core undergraduate offer as it was back in 2014. 15 and then in subsequent years, And now, every time we create a new course, for example, the B a, fashion marketing, consumer behaviour, we do think and look and research and see if there's an appropriate accreditation.
Either one that we've already got that can be extended or if we need something new. so yeah, so primarily I suppose it was, being up there in line with other comparable, business schools. Now, if other institutions have it, we should have it as well. and making sure it's the right fit for us. And some of our courses are quite niche. So, like, for example, the visual merchandising There aren't many courses like that.
and only I suppose I think we're the leader anyway. But the only institute we could find that kind of fit it for that was the visual merchan, British Display Society, which is not fashion focused, but it was the

kind of the closest fit. So we look at what's out there with management. It's a much bigger pool to draw from. so we looked at the various, accrediting bodies that offer management related. Acknowledgment or recognition? I wasn't in post. Well, I was in post, but I was off at the time when we they were when they selected, the CM I out of other potential contenders. So I'm not exactly sure why. They, were considered the, you know, the one to deal with. but they are like, you know, they're recognised internationally as well as UK wide, which is important for international students.
so that's the sort of thing we look at and obviously cost is a, plays an important role as well. Some of them are quite expensive. we, you know, we pay for our student membership, and I think that's not universal. I think from what I understand from my key contacts in the accrediting bodies, they don't all pay for their students. They have the accreditation.
But some students are asked to pay a membership fee, and then they do the registration for them and that sort of thing, or they pay the students membership. But if the student wants to take an exam or get an extra qualification through it, then they pay their own fees for that. So I think we are, I don't I wouldn't like to say unique, but perhaps almost unique in that we pay everything for our students and I think it's something we need to bang on about a bit more to our students.
I don't think they hear it when we first tell them, and then they forget, like, just how lucky they are. Because it saves them quite a lot of money, and for some of them, they don't have to do anything. They just have to kind of, you know, accept that they've got this extra recognition. It's handed to them on the plate. so, yes, those were the criteria we started with.
So what would be the most benefit for undergraduate courses? What would the competitor have? What is the best one that's the best fit for our courses? Is there anything that's fashion focused? I mean, a lot of them are broad, like the Chartered Institute of Marketing that can go across a huge range of courses. and obviously we're a fashion marketing specialist, but there isn't a fashion marketing accrediting body.
So we do. We use, Chartered Institute of Marketing. We looked at cost and their kind of international focus as well. You know, if it's if it's gonna be recognised overseas as well. no and of value to our overseas students, too.

Speaker 1
And can you give me an example of, the cost per student like examples of what they charge? But then that you do pay for If you're If you're OK to say that I don't know. Yes.

Speaker 2
Yeah. I don't mind, sharing some of the costs. they vary considerably from institute to institute, some of them, like the textile Institute. it's effectively like a fee free for the students, I suppose, because we have an LCF membership of the Textile Institute. So we're like a sort of corporate member. I know corporate's not. Not the right word because we're not a business as such.
We I suppose we're a charitable status. Anyway, we have a corporate membership which LCF pay is not fashion business school. and they have looked at two of our courses which have text and institute recognition. So the, B a buying and merchandising and MA, fashion design management and those courses have been mapped to the, textile institute criteria. So, we can brief the students at the start of the academic year and say you have the opportunity to have this student
membership of Textile Institute. It won't cost you a penny. and we don't have to pay anything additional for students who sign up. we did have to pay for the mapping exercise, but it's not very much. It's only about 250 quid, I think. And then that lasts for five years. So they're one of the cheapest, 250 for the mapping of the course programme to the CM to the Textile Institute. criteria.

Speaker 1
Nothing further than that. And nothing to the students.

Speaker 2
No. And we pay the LCF membership anyway because it's beneficial for staff as well as students and for the college to have membership of the institute.

Speaker 1
Have you mentioned what the membership cost was?

Speaker 2

I don't raise that purchase order anymore because it's a college one. I could find out. I can't remember off the top of my head. I. I don't think it's a huge amount, though, I think I mean, it's oh, I I'd have to look, I could find out under 1000. It's under 1000 a year.

Speaker 2, Speaker 1
Yeah, OK, All right, let's just say that for now.

Speaker 2
I mean, if you want me to find out, I can check, like, because Christian deals with that because it's college, not F BS budget. So I don't do that one anymore. But I would be able to find it somewhere. and it's certainly useful for staff as well, because they put on workshops and we've got a couple of staff who have membership of the Textile Institute.
So it's useful to get their newsletter, and I push those out through F BS Weekly and, and push them out and and move on to the A credit courses. and then I'd say CIM Charton Institute of Marketing. They're either them or the British Psychology Association. No, actually, yeah, It's a close call between those two British Psychological Society and the CIM, which is the most expensive, perhaps on paper, the British Psychological Society.
Because we have to pay about 2000 pounds a year. as a kind of, membership, I suppose you know, to maintain that membership, and then we pay a price per head per student. on top of that, but of course, the student numbers on those courses the MS C Applied psychology and the BS C, psychology of fashion are relatively low compared to some of our management courses.
so if we had, like, like BS C fashion management, we had 100 psychology students. It would be really expensive. I'm trying to remember what the course. The fee per head is, I. I think it's about 21 pounds a head per student. But there's this 2000 pounds that we pay on top of that for the institute kind of membership. And the CIM is comparable. Their kind of annual membership fee is about 1500 maybe slightly more Now, and then the price per head for student membership is it goes up year on year, and it's about about 65 pounds a head. I think we paid this year. so for that one, we give students the membership from year two. So we pay it for year two and year three. Because if we pay from year one, it's super expensive to pay it for three years. yeah, yeah, and they don't all engage, you know, some of them are really sort of whatever about it.
And you think Well, you know, we're paying quite a lot of money here, so we have a, active. Like you need to opt in If you want to have this membership, we don't just dole it out, because if they're not interested, we don't want to spend 65 pounds a head money down the drain if it doesn't mean anything to them. So we brief them as we do with all of them, and then they opt in, CM I and B DS we have a negotiated rate.
B DS have just changed their, membership structure. And they've introduced a flat fee of £980 a year. And that will cover all students in the cohort. So, you know, 123 or four if they're returning students, so whether you whether to register or, you know, 40 in each year, it's the same fee for each institution. We used to pay £20 a head, so it's slightly more slightly cheaper for us now that they've changed the structure.
that will be effective from September, 22 and CM. I, we have a negotiated contract with them, which is on a five year term. we renegotiated last year because we've just come to the end of the term and the F. The first year of the new contract started last September. So we enrolled year one students right through that. So you you pay one fee, and then they've got membership for their time at LCF. You know, on the mapped course, they're quite expensive.
now, what was it? I think I think we pay around 23,000 a year for the undergrad. For the sorry. For the the level five. And then we also have the level seven because the Level seven is for the MS C and the MB A, so, Yeah, but that that includes, registration fees and, like, membership and access to resources and all the materials and so on. so that is a biggie. Definitely.

Speaker 1
Sorry. Not the most expensive currently, I think.

Speaker 2
Yeah, yeah, but we have a lot of students that we register. So, you know, we we've When we set up the new contract, we were estimating around 100 a year of undergrad level five BS C students and about 50 a year for Postgrad. So MS, C and MB a students, and then we'll kind of level up the numbers. When we get towards the end of the five years, we have a separate contract for MA F ER A. Because they have one unit that's matched for the coaching. and that one is like a sort of flat fee, but not as much, because it's just one unit. It's not the whole, raft of It's not an award, but rather a

diploma, That's what The CM I, sorry. The BS, C and MS C students graduate with a diploma for a dual award, But the MA FE I students get an award, which is like in a lower kind of certificate, just a recognition for the one certificate. I'm trying to remember what their fears, and I think
it's around 3 4000, something like that. That's again. It's a five year one that we're approaching the end of that contract. I think this coming year is the last year of that contract. So we have to look at renewing that, you know, continuing at, which No doubt we will do. I must remember to put that on my to do list contract renewal because we normally do it at least six months. Advance. Yeah.

Speaker 1
the next go. Go on. Sorry. Is that Is that all of them, I think. Is it no,

Speaker 2
B DS V PSO C AC. I MA, They charge £50 a head flat fee. There's no, like, membership fee. we normally register students in year one. and the 50 pounds sees them through for the whole of their time here, so it's not, like 50 pounds a year. You register them in the in year one, and they they stay registered for the duration of their studies. However, on principle, they don't map all the units.
So if a student wants to get a certificate from S A, we have three maps units, which is the maximum they'll map, and then they have to take an additional unit. the B, a four unit if they want to get the sea certificate. and the fees for that are 100 and five, I think like a registration fee. which we will pay for students. Or rather, we will reimburse them because we can't physically pay it.
They have to register themselves to sit the exam and then claim a reimbursement. so we have. It's not for everyone on that course. So we don't We never expect the full cohort to do it because they're not all gonna go into accountancy type roles. but we maybe have about a dozen a year, something like that that will try for the B a for award, and then we'll reimburse them if they claim on time. so that's that's like an overview of cost per head.
I think that's all of them. Same as CIMB. DS B, BS textile. Yeah, and the new one we've got coming on, that's quite expensive. The MA, marketing Research Society. But we haven't yet got that recognition. I'm waiting for the final version of the handbook so I can send it through to be a creditor. We've done all the paperwork. We just We should get it this summer.

Speaker 2, Speaker 1
But, yeah, that's something we've put in the budget allocation for next year on the assumption that we will be approved, OK, and then in terms of, the the institute that this research is looking at, which is to do with sustainability and accrediting students with a relevant, documentation or badge of honour or whatever we're gonna call it.

Speaker 1
you know, whatever it is that they get, to say that they have participated within sustain, you know, engaged with sustainable development goals. it's been reflected within their project work. and they have, engaged with understanding, their own values and the values of, sustainable development. you've got currently, I think. And you can You can help me understand this. Nothing similar, to that. I mean, the closest I imagine would be the Textiles institute. is that right? And why do you think that is? And are you looking for something that is, filling that gap?

Speaker 2
I think it would be great to have something to fill that gap. we I suppose we've got the prime UN prime membership, and we do put in, of course, handbooks. You know, this unit links to the prime sustainable development goal, blah de blah. that's in the management handbooks. I don't know if it's just because they're the most organised and Angie's sort of the driving force behind our prime, membership. And so on.

Speaker 1
Just a side note. Guess who's getting prime handed over to them in when Angie leaves, Liz was like, you're going to become prime champion. And I was like, Am I? So she went, Yeah, cos it really aligns with what you want to do with your SF I So, be aware that it's gonna come and land on your desk. I was like, I don't even have a desk, but OK, so that's good.

Speaker 2, Speaker 1
I'll I'll find all about that then, so you think that's the closest in terms of in terms of, visibility, I suppose.

Speaker 2
And course handbooks and sort of, yes. Talking about sustainability. I suppose, raising consciousness of students in relation to curriculum. Then crime would be the best example of that. I think, there is also a a voluntary student group. One of the students in MS CS FM she fo founded a, sustainability society or something. I don't know if you know about her or about that.
I don't know much about it. I think I did hear about it on the grapevine. But I was shortlisting for, P a the P A post, the other earlier this week and one of the students from MS CS FM, applied for the post and on her application she put about, you know, having formed this society. And I checked with Liz because she was an MS CS FM student. I know Liz has done some teaching on that course, so I could quite easily find out who she is.
I've got I think I know who it is, but if I could find out for sure from Aisha or someone, because it might be a good person to speak to, You know, it's something that do you remember what their name is, who you think it is? We think it's Anna Volga or something. Her name is Anna, like WW wmu. But I think it's pronounced Volga or something like that. She used to be a, AC M. I, student ambassador, which is how I got to meet her when she was in year one or two or something.
But they don't do that. CM I ambassador role anymore. and they scrap that at CM. I so. But I do remember meeting her. And, but names are not visible. That's like restricted data when you're shortlisting. So I can't be sure, But if she was the driving force behind it, then I shouldn't know who it was or a and so we could quite easily find out.

Speaker 1
OK, I see.

Speaker 2
Interesting to speak to a student who's, you know, like, pushing for that. And I'm sure you could, and I'd be be useful to hook up with her.

Speaker 1
Definitely, definitely. Yeah. And then, in terms of mapping against courses, for you know who Who is it that looks at the mapping? Is it, course leaders and the institutes themselves, Or do you get involved? Do you check any of that? What's the processing like,

Speaker 2
it's all three. I suppose, if it's a new accreditation, they the accrediting bodies have, like, published criteria like, this is what we're looking for kind of thing. So, we would look at our curriculum. We're not gonna, like, do a kind of waste of time exercise. We look at it and say Yeah, we think we can align with that. if we're going through revalidation, or even validation, like the, consumer behaviour course. You know, we'll very much have it in mind that we want to achieve that recognition so units can be slightly tailored to make sure that they would meet that criteria. and then last year's whole raft of re approvals with CM I, for example, I think that was very much forefront, in their minds when they were looking at at, rejigging the units. But ultimately, it's the accrediting body which does the mapping.
It's, you know, they have to be comfortable and sure that what we offer will meet their criteria. So they say Yeah or nay, we've never yet been turned down or asked to tweak a unit a bit more. but that's that's how it works. And I normally support with, preparation of documentation, some of them, like the Textile Institute. it's a recent example that comes to mind when we applied for MA FDM. accreditation. I looked at the application form and then, like, filled in all the examples that I could and kind of put that together and did you know, maybe 75% of it, but it obviously needed the input of the course leader to, finesse it. And you know, somebody who would know the nuances of what's taught here and there and how that would kind of really align, and kind of bring it to life.
So it's not just dry course book handbook course handbook, language that I can copy and paste and add. So it has to be like a joint effort. and with CIM, for example, they're currently remapping our, courses that went through REAPPROVAL. So I should get the, remapping back any day now. They also update their own handbooks so that the units are mapped to CM I syllabus and their syllabus is updated.
It seems like every year I mean, I think they make small tweaks each year, and then they, they kind of unpicked and relaunched the syllabus in a big way a couple of years back. So if they if they do a big relaunch like that, they will voluntarily remap our units. So it's a bit of sometimes it's us, and sometimes it's them. And it's a nightmare keeping track of which, which version of the mapping as a student on, But it it's it's complicated with CM I but with other, accrediting bodies, it

seems straightforward, like CIM, you know, they haven't bothered us with that for a long time. and I think I understand from Tony that the reapproval, was fairly minimal for his course. So I don't think it's it's not a big deal. I'm waiting for the final hand, But then I can send it to them, in the next week or so hopefully and get them just to confirm there's no change to the mapping in terms.

Speaker 1
Oh, sorry. Your voice went in terms of the mapping. when you what? What? What level of detail does one need for this mapping? because I imagine in my head and this is probably where I need to start making more groundwork on the SF I and and certainly towards this MMB a, for the recommendations and my findings is that maybe the framework and standards need to be written first. Just be like chicken and egg, isn't it? You know that needs to be kind of written.
The the output, the the criteria, the benchmarking needs to be set first by the institute. The external before you guys can then go Well. Ah, actually, yes. This actually aligns to that. And this aligns to this. So that's that's how the mapping would go. It's institute first, then you because otherwise it was you. First, it would be you'd be creating your own thing. Hm? Yeah. And then on that, then Oh, go on. Were you gonna say something more?

Speaker 2
just you said creating your own thing. I was thinking about the British display society, and we've kind of fallen out of bed with them this year. I think you might have mentioned that before. and Ed, I think needs to Well, we're talking about doing something ourselves to to make a better accreditation for that course, the VM course, because we're not very happy
with B DS and that kind of it works. But it's not the best alignment, and we're not very happy with them. just some couple of instances this year that it's not ideal, so yeah.

Speaker 1
Yeah, why not? Yeah. and then so what do they need to do to be approved as in, like, you know, I know we've talked previously. Not in this capacity. where it's, you know, obviously been, captured. But, you mentioned the PR SBS P. I can't remember what they are now.

Speaker 2
Neither can I. No, I can't remember. I've got it in my notes. professional standards.

Speaker 2, Speaker 1
PS our body, isn't it?

Speaker 2
I think something like that. I got PR SB. I think it is. Let me have a look.

Speaker 1
Professional statutory and regulatory bodies. Yeah. So it's PSRB now does, this is a bit of again the chicken and egg situation that I don't understand. Does all of these accreditation bodies have to be listed within this PR SR? Yeah, PR SBS before engaging with yourselves Or does it? Does it not matter?

Speaker 2
No, they don't have to be, and they aren't also, For example, the British Display Society isn't we did talk to them about them becoming registered there. but there was something around, how I don't know about the marking of student work and how they oversee. you know that students have met certain criteria or something like that that they didn't quite come up to standard because we did get them to do an application.
and the reason being, it's something to do with Central UAL where they can put, they all I don't know if they can or rather they have to put something around PR SB identified accreditations that we have. I think you know that. What's it called the, programme space? I think it has to be public in the programme spec If if you have an accreditation, that's, PR SB recognised something like that that I know it goes through the the UAL quality board.
but they don't all have to be. And if you think about it, we have memberships that are not, accreditations, like the Association of Suppliers, British clothing industry, prime. You know, we've had all those other memberships, and they're nothing to do with PR SB. But they are certainly valuable.

And we have them on the F BS, web pages. So it's not applicable for all of them. I suppose it's like a a sort of quality standard for an accreditation that if they are there then you know that they are now a key player. They've got muscle.

Speaker 2, Speaker 1
certainly be a goal to work towards that.

Speaker 1
That what I can't understand is who runs the P, PS RBS? Because when you put it into Google, there's plenty of documentation from the university saying who we work with and you know what? What are they? And But I don't understand what, as in like is Is there a central website? Is it a government thing?

Speaker 2, Speaker 1
Like if you type in PSRB just to do, it's to do with the, what's it called?

Speaker 2
The quality it QSS the quality standards? What do they call the overarching body that, a AQA Yeah, it's to do with the QA.A.

Speaker 2, Speaker 1
I can find a Web link to send you because, because it's always I don't know, I'm never noting what this Web link was, because when you google it, it's really hard to find. If you yeah, if you can send it to me, that'd be absolutely brilliant.

Speaker 1
I can never I've got this QA a website in front of me now, which looks like it possibly is the one. But I don't necessarily trust it. It just says QA A and then who? We work with professional statutory and regulatory bodies, but it's like a list of them. and it's talking about, forums and stuff like that and It doesn't It's not very clear on OK, so how do you engage in, you know, finding out about registering with them and whatnot, and what do you need and how?
Yeah, so anyway, that's fine. I think I've just got one more question. because I think that's really gonna help me anyway. Formulate some of my recommendations to this of whether you know it's going through the route of waiting to get it accredited or just going for it. You know, designing something, creating something, presenting it and hoping that the decision maker says yes, let's map some LCF courses to it, and see how it goes.

Speaker 2
it depends what you want to get out of it, doesn't it? Because if you want to be something like an association, like a S BC I you know, that's what we do. and you provide, you know, like you bring people together and provide materials and workshops and all that sort of thing. That's one thing. But whether you want to a credit courses and link student achievement to, you know or other students, work to maybe achieving certain sustainable goals and
getting a tick or certificate or whatever, then that would be more like an accreditation. But it depends how you want it to be, doesn't it? What you want it to be?

Speaker 1
Yeah, well, that's it. And I think there's, there's elements for both or testing or reiterating and allowing it to run. And I think giving it, you know, something small to begin with would be would be quite a good idea. Just, you know, the fact that I haven't even got it off the ground yet shows you know just how much this will take. especially a long time, you know, full time teaching.
But yeah, I think, in terms of just that, I'm trying to fit this real viability aspect together for this, MB a report, which is that you know, the costing we've talked about. there's nothing currently similar that we think of we know of, apart from prime, which is something slightly different. it doesn't matter whether it needs to be accredited by, the PS RBS on or not right now, in terms of what you think in your mind, the students, value will be because obviously you speak to a lot
of them anyway. When throughout the various ones, What is it you think they need? And I know you, I. I have been speaking to students as well, but what are the more sort of most common things that you hear from the students in terms of what they benefit from it, or or maybe even sometimes what they think they don't benefit?

Speaker 2
Yeah, that's interesting, because I'm doing my end of year student evaluation report at the moment about how they value their accreditations, which we try, and we survey them each year to get that. And it just struck me the other day that one of the things we bang on about for students Oh, great resources. You know, you can go into the CM I port and they've got tonnes of videos and, you know, just all sorts of, great resources to use.
It's like a a library, but all over again, just without the fashion focus. and we say that about all the accreditations. But when we get feedback, they very rarely say, Oh, I value my accreditation because there's fabulous resources. What they really like is, it's something to put on their CV. It makes them stand out from the crowd. So they think, and I think it will stand them in good stead to get a job because they can put I've got this diploma as well as my degree.
So I would say it's this the sort of professionalism, the external recognition I've got a list I can send you, actually, of the like key things that students please. I've kind of I categorised it because I thought, there's it. It varies slightly from accreditation to accreditation, the only one that says, Oh, it's good for networking.
That was B DS. Nobody else said that, or VM students, and even that is not great for networking, to be honest. But most of them it was about the professional recognition and the extra qualification and how great it looks on their CV. so I can put those things together for you.

Speaker 1
I can put that in a secondary, research in the paper, in my yeah paper. So that'd be great.

Speaker 2
Yeah. yeah, but I Yeah, I suppose it's I suppose I We we kind of think, Well, we're teaching them, and they must want to use the resources because it supports their units. But they never seem to get excited about the resources. I mean, textile Institute has really good resources, but they never approach the textile Institute to use them. To my knowledge, I think it's because they have to put in a bit of effort to do that. It's not like, forget about it.

Speaker 1
Yeah, it's not laid out on a platter, but yeah, that's very interesting, because that was from some of the feedback I got from the collaborative challenge was the same, which is that, you know, they come out of their degrees with all their masters with, you know, a qualification in women's wear or photo MA photography or fashion photography or something.
But it's not MA fashion photography. Oh, and then, you know, I did a lot on sustainability. there's no accreditation there. So you know that. You know, if they were to have something to say, yes, I did this. But also, I got a qualification with the sustainable Fashion Institute then and it means that they can put down their CV.

Speaker 2, Speaker 1
And hopefully, if they are going into that sort of area, they can, Yeah, The other thing they really like is they like, certificates.

Speaker 2
they love it because you're probably aware we we ran that collaboration with LIM again recently. And, we just do this certificate that's got Liz's signature on it and John Keane from LIM. And it just says certificate of completion or something. It's only like two afternoons, but one of them was chasing me for the certificate because I had to wait to get the template from LIM.
and I sent them out. I don't know, about a week or something after the collaboration, and I got quite a few. Oh, thank you. This is great. Just like a bit of completion of a two day master class and another student on, CM I they run these annual awards which don't quite fit with our academic year, which I keep pushing back to them and saying this doesn't really work because we want to link it to achievement through the, dissertation. Anyway, you can put a student forward and say we think the student should be recognised because they've done blah, blah. and then if they're shortlisted, they go on to get AC M I award, but just put in the person's name for they get this certificate of recognition or something. They call it And the student battery. Oh, I'm so pleased. You know, over the moon was his words. I've got the certificate of recognition, but it just means so much to them to have them.

Speaker 2, Speaker 1

and it's digital, isn't it?

Speaker 2
It's digital. Yeah, it's so easy to do. Yeah, it's put your crest on it or something and make it a PDF or a PowerPoint or whatever.

Speaker 2, Speaker 1
yeah, they just They seem to really value it, I suppose on LinkedIn stuff, don't they?

Speaker 2
Yeah, yeah, but it's just that I don't know. I suppose everyone likes to feel like like when you're at school, you know, you think Oh, I got a certificate for doing well in maths today or something that probably comes from that. But you've got this, like, somebody thinks I'm good.

Speaker 1
Really? Good idea. Thank you. I think that's it for all my questions. Thank you so much. is there anything further from yourself that you think you might have forgotten? You might wanna add?

Speaker 2
Yeah, I know. I don't think so. I'm happy to talk again, though. You know, it's especially over the summer when it's relatively quiet.

Speaker 1
Well, I'll stop the recording here.

2.2 Thematic analysis with the ToC Focus Group initial themes

1. In your words, not mine, on the topic of this Institute for Sustainable Fashion and accreditations, what do you think the problem is that I am trying to solve?	Accreditation of improved knowledge about sustainability-. - → Giving students a "badge" enhancing employability. - → Giving courses/institutions a "badge" enhancing credibility, appeal to students. Transparency of skills & knowledge acquired. Employability → Quality stamp of education within sustainability. For companies to better understand. Sustainability is a vague/generic term but is increasingly growing in importance when making business decisions. Focus: This sets a benchmark of professionalism and a unified approach to tackling this problem. Sustainability is a very broad, almost meaningless term. Students leave university saying they are experts in sustainability, but no one knows what this means or if it aligns with their expectations/needs. Brands Want to Do Good: - Brands want to do good and embrace sustainability, but they just don't know how.
2. "Who do you think the key	Stakeholders: - University Academic Institutions: - Academic recognition: Academic institutions as stakeholders.

stakeholders are? **The key audiences?**	- Course demand/courses & joint modules. - Fashion professionals – Retraining/Upgrading new skills. - Graduates – Quality of education. - Businesses – For employees, networking in the industry.
3. "What is the entry point to reaching those audiences?	Junior Employees of large firms looking to authenticate based on career growth/passion, employers. Fashion Employers: Brands, design studios, manufacturers. Industry Collaborators: Designers and others in fields who want to work in fashion. - Students. - Courses: CLs, Deans, Universities. Others: - Music? - Industrial design? - Tech? - Fashion week? - Universities? - Think tanks? - Research centres? - Cultural centres? All Brands: - From fashion to food and everything in between. Entry Point: 4. Membership: a. Should it stand alone or be partnered with a Fashion Council or certification bodies (e.g., Higg Index, B-Corp)? b. Could it align with something already established to ensure a framework for what it covers? c. Alternatively, through education, or should it operate completely separate from the ground up? d. Platform: Website, network, etc. Online Application: Sponsored by employer/part-time course for validation. Application may include submission of portfolio/essay to demonstrate more.
5. "Thinking of the essence of this membership and this accreditation, what's the entry point for reaching	Key Components: - Accreditation Modules: - Academic/industry staff could sign up for accreditation modules delivered by academic institutions leading to accreditation. - "Executive education" model. - Accredited UG/PG Courses: - Students could enrol in accredited UG/PG courses. - Institutions would pay SFI a membership & accreditation fees.

the audience?	- CIPD model → L5/L7 diploma accredited modules into UG/PG academic curriculum. Validation: you'll need to ensure a way to validate the skills/knowledge. ○ Connect with a course(s), but also how does it respond directly to the skills – Will you need to break down the skills areas? Working Closely with Employers: a. Benefit: So a foundational name on board, i.e., partnership with ASOS. b. Value: This will give prospective students validation that this can progress their career because it is recognised by employers. c. Expansion: Also partnership with manufacturers, etc.
6. What steps are needed to bring about this change for the SFI to get off the ground?	Steps: 1. Formation of SFI: - → Industry to join/invest in... 2. Promotion of Benefits: - → Knowledge of "funds/organisers." 3. --Gradually recognised industry standards of recognition or cost? 4. Membership? Persuasion into Many Large Companies: a. Vision: Every fashion board member has at least one director who is SFI accredited. b. Goal: Or comparison of SFI to complete grievance scheme, or each member of the supply chain is SFI accredited employee. c. Strategy: Add paragraph of performance to financial report.
7. "What is the measurable effect that could come out of this?	Measurables: - Number of accreditations awarded. - --Does not guarantee charge? Any answers or return to charge?-- Benefits for Leadership Opportunities: a. Impact: Leads to greater funding/sponsorship. Benefit - Wider Benefit: ● Reputation for the Brand: ○ Mindset Change: In the industry.

	○ Levelling Out the Approach/Competition: ■ Point: Can't say we didn't know → Membership ensures that we do know Measurable Change: ● Shift in Knowledge: Focus: Measuring change in shift in knowledge in the industry..
8. What is the long-term change that you think, in your opinion, do you see as the goal for the SFI organisation ?	Improved Education: a. Focus: Educating individuals who then drive change from the inside out. b. Goal: Spread practices and purpose to become leaders of a future with accredited awareness of sustainability. c. Need to Overcome Objections: i. Continuous Professional Development (CPD). ii. Ongoing fellowship/membership levels. d. Need to "Channel" graduates. Long-Term Change: ● Creating a Standard: ○ Goal: Creating a standard for the industry. ○ Focus: Changing processes & approaches of businesses. ○ Standardising/Educating: ■ Target: What sustainability means in the fashion industry & for people skills.
9. "What could hinder the progress of this? What assumptions am I possibly making that might hinder the progress of this? And who are my enablers?	Enablers: ● Resources and Partnerships: ○ Funding: You need a backer for funding! ○ Investment: Investment of time to promote, devise syllabus, etc. ○ Support: LCF/FBS will support the launch (if I ask them!). ■ Question: Under CSF Exclusivity? Plan for funding? ○ Considerations: ■ Should CSF be approached? What if they fail to support ■ Technology & Support: Advisory boards could help with this?!

	○ Consultation: Contact Paloma Wool Consultancy. Enable It: ● Coverage: ○ Action: You will need to ensure it covers what both businesses require but also pushes for change. ○ Potential Strategy: I think it could make sense if it shows similarity with either auditing for sustainability (Higg). ○ Considerations: Institutions might view this quite differently - as well as job roles (design, supply chain, marketing, buying, etc.). ○ Challenge: Will there be a one-size-fits-all? Challenge to define the key elements. - Students Using Their Knowledge: - Studying in fashion. - Support for This: - Give admin support, sales. - Help with mapping, analysis. - Give them brand names.
10. "How can I gain support? What factors might be outside of my control in order for that to happen?	Assumptions: ● Validity of the Proposal: ○ Testing Assumptions: Need to talk to brands to see if this is valued by them. ○ Risks: What if it does not enhance anyone's employability? Students would not want it for this reason. ○ Market Advantage: Provide institutions with competitive advantages in recruitment to courses. Needs to have longevity. - Long-Term Vision: You need to be clearly offering something - framework can't just be a badge for anyone. Needs to be more than a future vision, needs early adopters and a workload of doing the accreditation.

2.2.1 Hand written notes from participants in the ToC Focus Group

2.2.2 Transcripts from the hand written notes from the ToC focus group

LG - Transcription of handwritten notes:
1. Problem to be Solved:
Accreditation of improved knowledge about sustainability-.
- → Giving students a "badge" enhancing employability.
- → Giving courses/institutions a "badge" enhancing credibility, appeal to students.

2. Stakeholders:
- University Academic Institutions:
- Academic recognition: Academic institutions as stakeholders.
- Course demand/courses & joint modules.

3. Key Components:
- Accreditation Modules:
- Academic/industry staff could sign up for accreditation modules delivered by academic institutions leading to accreditation.
- "Executive education" model.

- Accredited UG/PG Courses--:
- Students could enrol in accredited UG/PG courses.
- Institutions would pay SFI a membership & accreditation fees.
- --CIPD model-- → L5/L7 diploma accredited modules into UG/PG academic curriculum.

4. Steps:
1. --Formation of SFI--:
- → Industry to join/invest in...
2. --Promotion of Benefits--:
- → Knowledge of "funds/organisers."
3. --Gradually recognised industry standards of recognition or cost?--
4. --Membership?--

5. Measurables:
- --Number of accreditations awarded.--
- --Does not guarantee charge? Any answers or return to charge?--
6. Main Benefits:
Benefits for Leadership Opportunities:
Impact: Leads to greater funding/sponsorship.
7. Long-Term Change - Goal:
Improved Education:
Focus: Educating individuals who then drive change from the inside out.
Goal: Spread practices and purpose to become leaders of a future with accredited awareness of sustainability.
Need to Overcome Objections:
Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
Ongoing fellowship/membership levels.
Need to "Channel" graduates.
8. Enablers:
Resources and Partnerships:
Funding: You need a backer for funding!
Investment: Investment of time to promote, devise syllabus, etc.
Support: LCF/FBS will support the launch (if I ask them!).

Question: Under CFG [CFG stands for some entity] group? Exclusivity? Plan for funding?
Considerations:
Should CFG be approached? What if they fail to support?
Approach Grant or Paygate?
Technology & Support: Advisory boards could help with this?!
Consultation: Contact Paloma Wool Consultancy.
9. Assumptions:
Validity of the Proposal:
Testing Assumptions: Need to talk to brands to see if this is valued by them.
Risks: What if it does not enhance anyone's employability? Students would not want it for this reason.
Market Advantage: Provide institutions with competitive advantages in recruitment to courses.
The findings outline the key aspects of the proposed accreditation system for sustainability knowledge in academic settings, involving the creation of a Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI) and its role in enhancing both student employability and the credibility of academic courses and institutions. These seem to focus on the benefits, goals, enablers, and assumptions for a project related to sustainability education, with a specific focus on partnerships, funding, and strategic planning to overcome potential challenges and objections.

JL Transcription of handwritten notes:
1.
Transparency of skills & knowledge acquired.
Employability → Quality stamp of education within sustainability.
For companies to better understand.
2. Key Audience:
Fashion professionals – Retraining/Upgrading new skills.
Graduates – Quality of education.
Businesses – For employees, networking in the industry.
3. Entry Point:
Membership:
Should it stand alone or be partnered with a Fashion Council or certification bodies (e.g., Higg Index, B-Corp)?
Could it align with something already established to ensure a framework for what it covers?
Alternatively, through education, or should it operate completely separate from the ground up?
Platform: Website, network, etc.
4.Validation:
Covered a bit in the above. You'll need to ensure a way to validate the skills/knowledge.
Connect with a course(s), but also how does it respond directly to the skills – Will you need to break down the skills areas?
5. Measurable Effect:
Working with Targets:
For the change within the business.
Would it need to include work experience/case study for change?
Measurable effect of members might require...
5. Measurable Change:
Shift in Knowledge:
Focus: Measuring change in shift in knowledge in the industry.
5B. Benefit - Wider Benefit:
Reputation for the Brand:
Mindset Change: In the industry.

Levelling Out the Approach/Competition:
Point: Can't say we didn't know → Membership ensures that we do know.
6. Long-Term Change:
Creating a Standard:
Goal: Creating a standard for the industry.
Focus: Changing processes & approaches of businesses.
Standardising/Educating:
Target: What sustainability means in the fashion industry & for people skills.
7. Enable It:
Coverage:
Action: You will need to ensure it covers what both businesses require but also pushes for change.
Potential Strategy: I think it could make sense if it shows similarity with either auditing for sustainability (Higg).
Considerations: Institutions might view this quite differently - as well as job roles (design, supply chain, marketing, buying, etc.).
Challenge: Will there be a one-size-fits-all? Challenge to define the key elements.
These notes seem to focus on the need for transparency and validation in skills and knowledge related to sustainability in fashion, targeting key audiences such as professionals, graduates, and businesses. They also consider the strategic positioning of a membership model, either as a standalone entity or in partnership with established organisations, and the need for measurable outcomes to track the impact of the proposed changes.
These notes explore the broader benefits of implementing a membership model that focuses on sustainability education within the fashion industry. They discuss how this could shift knowledge and practices across the industry, enhance brand reputation, create industry standards, and consider the challenges in standardising these practices while addressing diverse business needs.

JWL Transcription of handwritten notes:
1.Sustainability is a vague/generic term but is increasingly growing in importance when making business decisions.
Focus: This sets a benchmark of professionalism and a unified approach to tackling this problem.
2.Junior Employees of large firms looking to authenticate based on career growth/passion, employers.
3.Online Application:
Sponsored by employer/part-time course for validation. Application may include submission of portfolio/essay to demonstrate more.
4.Working Closely with Employers:
Benefit: So a foundational name on board, i.e., partnership with ASOS.
Value: This will give prospective students validation that this can progress their career because it is recognised by employers.
Expansion: Also partnership with manufacturers, etc.
5.Persuasion into Many Large Companies:
Vision: Every fashion board member has at least one director who is SFI accredited.
Goal: Or comparison of SFI to complete grievance scheme, or each member of supply chain is SFI accredited employee.
Strategy: Add paragraph of performance to financial report.
6.Entirely Principal Employees:
Leadership: Take leadership roles and influence from inside corporations - like having an employed pressure group member. This is better than protests from the outside.
7.Strict Definition of Sustainability:

Requirement: Employees have to sign off on to retain membership or write commentary as to why this has not been obtained, as signed off by sponsor (i.e., boss at company department).
8.Justifying the Language:
Benefits of SFI vs. Department Budgets for Subscription:
Mitigation: This could be mitigated by branding SFI as indispensable to any 'green' company or membership enables entire sponsor firm to get one free talk each year from sustainable leaders that anyone can attend.
Prestige: There needs to be some prestige attached to entry which may deter some people, but this will avoid 'greenwashing' by firms signing up.
These notes explore the importance of sustainability in business decision-making and the role of junior employees, online applications, and employer partnerships in advancing career growth. They emphasise the need for industry-wide recognition of SFI accreditation, particularly within large companies, and the strategic value of embedding sustainability advocates within corporate structures to drive change from within. Also, the importance of setting strict sustainability standards within the SFI membership model, including requiring employees to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability or explain why they haven't met certain criteria. Additionally, they suggest strategies for justifying the costs associated with SFI membership, such as branding it as essential for green companies and offering added value through exclusive events. The concept of attaching prestige to membership is highlighted as a way to avoid superficial engagement (greenwashing) by companies.

BG Transcription of handwritten notes:
Context:Sustainability-- is a very broad, almost meaningless term. Students leave university saying they are experts in sustainability, but no one knows what this means or if it aligns with their expectations/needs.
Key Audience/Stakeholders:
- --Fashion Employers--: Brands, design studios, manufacturers.
- --Industry Collaborators--: Designers and others in fields who want to work in fashion.
- --Students--.
- --Courses--: CLs, deans, universities.
- --Others--:
  - Music?
  - Industrial design?
  - Tech?
  - Fashion week?
  - Universities?
  - Think tanks?
  - Research centres?
  - Cultural centres?

Entry:
- --Networks and Personal Contacts--.
- --Endorsement--: From organisations like LCF (London College of Fashion) and other similar bodies.
- --Collaboration--: With a similar organisation in a different field - does this exist?
- --Conversations--: Flexible - what do they need?

Getting Off the Ground:
- --Pilot Course--: Map and test with stakeholder and user/student feedback.
- --Clarity of Offer--: Easily communicable - specifics.
- --Model--: How it works; blueprint? process map?
- --Contracts/Network--: Agreement and payment from decision makers.
- --Team/Board--: Who will mentor/admin support.

- --Promotion--: So people actually care - so it’s not meaningless.

Measurable Effect:
- --Clarity on Sustainability--:
  - Somehow categorised and quantified.
  - --Shared Model--: Brands and customers using a well-understood and defined definition of sustainability - reduces greenwashing. Words have to mean something.

- --Student Employment Rates--:
  - --Sustainability Accredited--: Brands and startups know you’re accredited.

Wider Benefits:
- --Student Community-- or like-minded peers.
- --UK Manufacturing Investment?--:
  - Broader supply chain links between graduates and universities.

Long-Term Change:
- --No Greenwashing--:
  - Sustainability replaced with widely understood terms and metrics.
  - Sustainable fashion being easier to do as students know, brands hire them; it's all mapped and communicated.

- --Students Using Their Knowledge--:
  - Staying in fashion.
  - --Support for This--:
    - Give admin support, sales.
    - Help with mapping, analysis.
    - Give them brand names.
- --Proof it Works--:
  - Needs to have longevity.
  - --Long-Term Vision--: You need to be clearly offering something - framework can’t just be a badge for anyone. Needs to be more than a future vision, needs early adopters and a workload of doing the accreditation.

These notes focus on the measurable impact and long-term changes that a clear and quantifiable model of sustainability could have in the fashion industry. The emphasis is on creating well-defined sustainability metrics to prevent greenwashing, improving student employability through accreditation, and fostering long-term changes in industry practices. The notes also touch on the importance of providing support and proof of success to ensure the longevity and credibility of the sustainability accreditation program.

On the challenges and strategies involved in making sustainability a meaningful concept within fashion education. They outline the key stakeholders, entry points for establishing the initiative, and steps for launching a pilot course and securing endorsements, partnerships, and clear communication to ensure the program's success.

AM Transcription of handwritten notes:

1.Brands Want to Do Good--:
  - Brands want to do good and embrace sustainability, but they just don’t know how.

2. All Brands--:
  - From fashion to food and everything in between.

3. Two-Fold Promotion--:
  - Promotion from us to them; from a bronze, silver, and gold standard.

4.Massive Re-Education:
  - There is huge ignorance out there.

5.Numbers of Members--:
- Members wanting to promote their membership and brands wanting to embrace involvement and collaboration.
- -I do think it should give people the opportunity to have letters after their name to be a voice.-
6.Increase Employability:
- Brands being seen in a positive light, particularly with consumers - marketers have the opportunity to promote involvement, "expert" status within a brand.
- -Leading to- a better world, better knowledge and understanding of sustainability, plus cascading this knowledge down to the wider consumer to a better appreciation for sustainability.
7. Buying In from the Powers That Be:
- The courses need to be tailored and be loose enough to be able to cater to different sectors, i.e., how sustainability can be embraced in a buying department or a finance department or a marketing department.
- -Big-name brands to promote their involvement.-
These notes reflect on the challenges and strategies for encouraging brands to embrace sustainability, highlighting the need for education, tailored courses, and the promotion of brand involvement. The idea of establishing tiered standards (bronze, silver, gold) and promoting sustainability as a means to improve employability and brand reputation is also emphasised. Additionally, there's a call for re-education and collaboration to drive the adoption of sustainable practices across various sectors.

3. Student participation form Template (all ticked electronically)

Participation Consent Form
Title of Study: Collaborative Development of the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI)

Researcher: Kelly Darcy
Institution: London College of Fashion
Contact Information: k.darcy@fashion.arts.ac.uk

Purpose of the Study
You are invited to participate in a research study aimed at understanding the collaborative efforts involved in developing the Sustainable Fashion Institute (SFI). Your involvement will include participation in workshops, focus groups, and/or interviews as part of the project. The data collected will help assess the viability, strategies, and outcomes of the SFI.

Participation Overview
Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits. The information gathered will be used solely for the purposes of this research project and may be published in academic journals, reports, or presented in academic settings.

What Will Be Involved
As a participant, you may be asked to:
- Provide input during workshops and focus groups on topics related to sustainability and the development of the SFI.

- Contribute to brainstorming sessions and collaborative work related to the project's objectives.
- Share your insights, experiences, and reflections through interviews or questionnaires.

Confidentiality
All information gathered during this research will be kept strictly confidential. Any identifying information will be anonymised, and data will be securely stored and only accessible by the research team. Your contributions will not be attributed to you individually unless explicit consent is given.

Potential Risks
There are no significant risks anticipated from participating in this study. However, should you feel any discomfort, you are free to withdraw at any time.

Potential Benefits
Your participation will contribute to the development of the SFI and may enhance your understanding of sustainable practices in fashion. Furthermore, your insights will help shape a valuable educational and professional resource in the fashion industry.

Informed Consent Statement
I have read and understood the information provided above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research project. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time and that my identity will remain confidential unless I give explicit consent otherwise.

Tick Here ☐