



# Pathways to Net Zero

## ISEP

### Qualification Specification

The ISEP Pathways to Net Zero Course is a course that gives clear, consistent guidance on best practices in response to the climate crisis, the course aims to provide supervisors and leaders with a strategic and operational overview of environmental sustainability as it affects their specific industry and work area.



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## Introduction to Apex Training

Apex Training is the training arm of The Verdancy Group, delivering accredited green skills programmes across Scotland and the wider UK. We specialise in practical, industry-focused learning that supports individuals and organisations to develop the knowledge required for the transition to a low-carbon built environment.

Training is delivered online, in our Apex Training Centres and through partner venues, with options for employer-based delivery where suitable. All programmes are led by practising industry specialists to ensure alignment and compliance with current standards, regulations and sector expectations.

## About The Verdancy Group and ISEP

The Verdancy Group is a specialist provider of green skills training, consultancy, sustainability education, and workforce development. Our programmes are designed to meet emerging industry needs and support national and regional net zero goals.

The Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) is the global membership body for anyone wanting sustainable change that delivers across government, business and society.

By harnessing the collective expertise and experience of our global membership, ISEP set the standard in sustainable leadership, knowledge, skills and practice.

Whether you're an environmental specialist, a sustainability generalist, or just want to be a champion for change in your area - ISEP empower people with cutting-edge evidence and insights, enabled with world-class training and guidance, and ensure excellence with unrivalled professional standards and assessment.

# Pathways to Net Zero

## Overview

The ISEP Pathways to Net Zero course equips supervisors, managers, and organisational leaders with the knowledge and confidence to drive effective climate action within their organisation. Participants gain a clear, practical understanding of what net zero means, why it matters, and how to apply best-practice sustainability principles in their own sector.

## Duration

14 Guided Learning Hours/2 days.

## Who Is This Course For?

This course is ideal for anyone who is:

- Leading or supporting a net-zero or carbon-reduction strategy
- Taking on new sustainability responsibilities
- Communicating net-zero ambitions within their organisation
- Working to decarbonise areas such as supply chain, travel, estates, operations or services

A clear, accessible introduction for teams who want to turn net-zero ambition into practical action.

## Materials And Certification

Learners will be provided with access to all required learning materials through online or in-person delivery formats.

Learners who successfully meet the assessment requirements will receive a certificate accredited by ISEP.

## Assessment

The assessment for ISEP Pathways to Net Zero course consists of an online 20-question multiple-choice test.

The test is completed through the ISEP assessment portal and candidates are sent a link upon registration to the assessment.

## Progression After This Course

Learners wishing to progress after this course should consider taking the following course:

- Foundation Certificate in Sustainability and Environmental Management

# Course Structure and Learning Outcomes

There are eight Learning Outcomes for ISEP Pathways to Net Zero which correspond to the sections of the course:

## Learning Outcome 1

### Why Net Zero?

#### Assessment Criteria

- Explain what is net zero and related terms
- Explain the urgency of the underlying climate science driving the net zero agenda
- Explain the main international policy context for responding to the climate crisis
- Explain the UK policy context and drivers

#### Learning Outcome Content

- Summary of scientific consensus on climate action and principal recommendations of the IPCC AR6 Climate Change 2021 report and explanation of the key greenhouse gases
- Climate model predictions and scenarios including carbon budgets and reduction pathways necessary to keep warming below 1.5 globally (and the necessity for net zero)
- International agreements and governance for net zero including the Paris Agreement 2015
- Differences for a net zero approach between global level, state level entities and individual actors [e.g., companies]
- Introduction to outline terms including net zero, carbon neutral, climate neutral, climate positive (and negative)
- Introduction to carbon offsets and carbon removals
- The UK context - Climate Change Act, SECR and ESOS



## Learning Outcome 2

### Responding to Net Zero

#### Assessment Criteria

- Explain the risks and opportunities of net zero including on future business viability, reputation, supply chain vulnerabilities etc
- Explain the business and environmental benefits of lowcarbon goods and services
- Explain the requisite corporate governance, resourcing and accountability for delivering net zero

#### Learning Outcome Content

- What makes a robust net zero claim?
- An overview of supporting initiatives, standards and frameworks including Race to Zero (UNFCCC)
- Race to Zero Breakthrough Initiatives [from different sectors]
- Risks and opportunities across the value chain from the transition away from fossil fuels (including risks from stranded assets)
- Building capacity for net zero - required governance, senior leadership - getting buy-in
- Developing internal capacity for delivering net zero - role of training, internal communication, procurement, finance, IT coalitions etc.

## Learning Outcome 3

# Greenhouse Gas Accounting: A Primer

### Assessment Criteria

- Explain how to establish a greenhouse gas inventory across all three scopes
- Explain the main principles of greenhouse gas accounting (including using activity data and emission factors)

### Learning Outcome Content

- Explain different types of carbon footprint (basic overview - corporate, product/lifecycle, country level, individual etc.)
- The main principles of establishing a greenhouse gas inventory and the differences between Scope 1, 2 and 3
- Greenhouse Gas Protocol corporate standard and supplementary guidance Cinc. Scope 2 standard, Scope 3 Value Chain standard) and other relevant standards including ISO 14064 and other carbon accounting standards
- Databases of emissions factors (Defra, ICE etc)
- Be able to explain the difference between location-based and market-based carbon accounting for Scope 2 emissions and why dual disclosure is important
- Basics of putting together an initial Scope 3 screening (e.g., using the Quantis Evaluator tool)
- Improving Scope 3 data over-time (e.g., moving from spend based to activity-based carbon calculations)

## Learning Outcome 4

# Carbon Neutrality

### Assessment Criteria

- Explain what carbon neutral means and its application for organisations, products and services

### Learning Outcome Content

- Understanding the difference between net zero, carbon neutral
- Carbon neutrality - outline methodology using PAS 2060 as a reference



## Learning Outcome 5

# Net Zero Methodologies

### Assessment Criteria

- Explain how to establish science-based targets (methodologies)
- Explain how to establish a net zero strategy (near-and long-term targets)

### Learning Outcome Content

- Science-based targets- calculating
- Science-Based Targets initiative (SBTi) and its Net Zero Standard
- Carbone4 Net Zero Initiative
- Sector-based methodologies

## Learning Outcome 6

### Developing a Decarbonization Plan

#### Assessment Criteria

- Implement a decarbonisation plan with suitable targets and milestones to deliver on a science-based target and/or net zero objective

## Learning Outcome Content

- ISEP Pathways to Net Zero (November 2020) and the Greenhouse Gas Management Hierarchy
- Developing a decarbonisation plan to deliver on net zero
- Avoiding and eliminating emissions - examples and key considerations
- Reducing emissions and energy management - examples and key considerations
- Compensation and neutralisation - examples and key considerations including nature-based solutions. The role of carbon offsets alongside reduction strategies
- Use of financial mechanisms such as internal carbon pricing
- Dealing with uncertainty with longer-term targets (costing, technologies, processes)
- Examples of decarbonisation strategies from different sectors including decarbonising property, transport, industrial processes etc.
- Purchasing renewable energy - certification requirements

## Learning Outcome 7

### Net Zero Across the Value Chain

#### Assessment Criteria

- Explain how to reduce greenhouse emissions where these are influenced but not directly controlled (Scope 3)

## Learning Outcome Content

- Collaborating with your supply chain and other partner organisations on data collection, target setting and decarbonisation. The benefits of managing this with wider sustainability risks (modern slavery, conflict/critical minerals/environmental issues etc).
- Approaches for working with the value chain (e.g., CDP supply chain reporting processes)

## Learning Outcome 8

### Communicating Net Zero

#### Assessment Criteria

- Explain how to communicate externally about responses to the climate crisis, net zero and making robust green claims

## Learning Outcome Content

- Communicating on a net zero objective and its progress - what good practice looks like
- Communicating the environmental benefits of low-carbon goods and services
- Green claims fundamentals and examples and how to avoid greenwash
- Relevance of net zero to reporting frameworks including CDP and TCFD

# Version History

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Actioned By	Reviewed / Approved By
Version 1.0	January 2026	First publication of the Award Specification for the ISEP Pathways to Net Zero Course	Apex Training (Author)	Verdancy QA Lead

## Document Control Statement

This document is maintained by Apex Training, part of The Verdancy Group. All updates are recorded through internal quality assurance procedures. The most recent version of this specification supersedes all previous versions.



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