

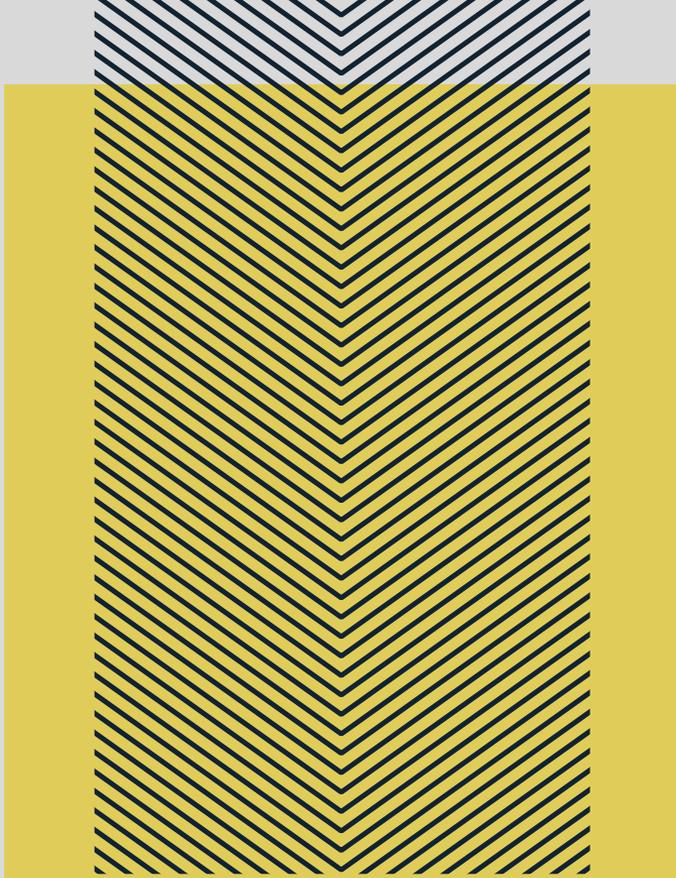


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# Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

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May 2024



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# Session outline

Increase knowledge of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and how it can be integrated into teaching.

- What does ESD involve?
- Why is ESD important, and do learners want it?
- Signpost other resources
- Group task & discussion

Timings: Intro – 15m, group activity 20m, discussion 10m



**Education for  
Sustainable  
Development**

A roadmap

**#ESDfor2030**



# Sustainable Development

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”

(Our Common Future, WCED, 1987)

Sustainable development applies to economic, social and environmental needs. It inspired the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.





# Education for Sustainable Development

## Education for Sustainable Development

“Education for sustainable development (ESD) empowers learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society empowering people of all genders, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity.

ESD is a lifelong learning process and an integral part of quality education that enhances cognitive, social and emotional and behavioural dimensions of learning. It is holistic and transformational and encompasses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment itself.

ESD is recognised as a key enabler of all SDGs and achieves its purpose by transforming society.”

(UNESCO, 2014)



# Why?

## External factors

- Wider sector activity e.g., EAUC, Advance HE, People & Planet scores & other institutions
- Student interest, and student groups e.g., Students Organising for Sustainability.

## Improve educational outcomes

- Sustainability as a field is growing enormously, it is an increasingly important part of work and life. Boosting employability.
- By integrating sustainability into teaching activities, we can offer learners authentic experiences that will provide real-world skills.
- Interdisciplinary issues will widen learners knowledge and practices and give them experience of wicked and messy interdisciplinary issues that require holistic solutions.
- Increasing the knowledge, and agency of our learners.
- Boosting student engagement with BNU sustainability efforts.



# Data

NUS and HEA longitudinal studies between 2010 and 2017. With similar results each year.

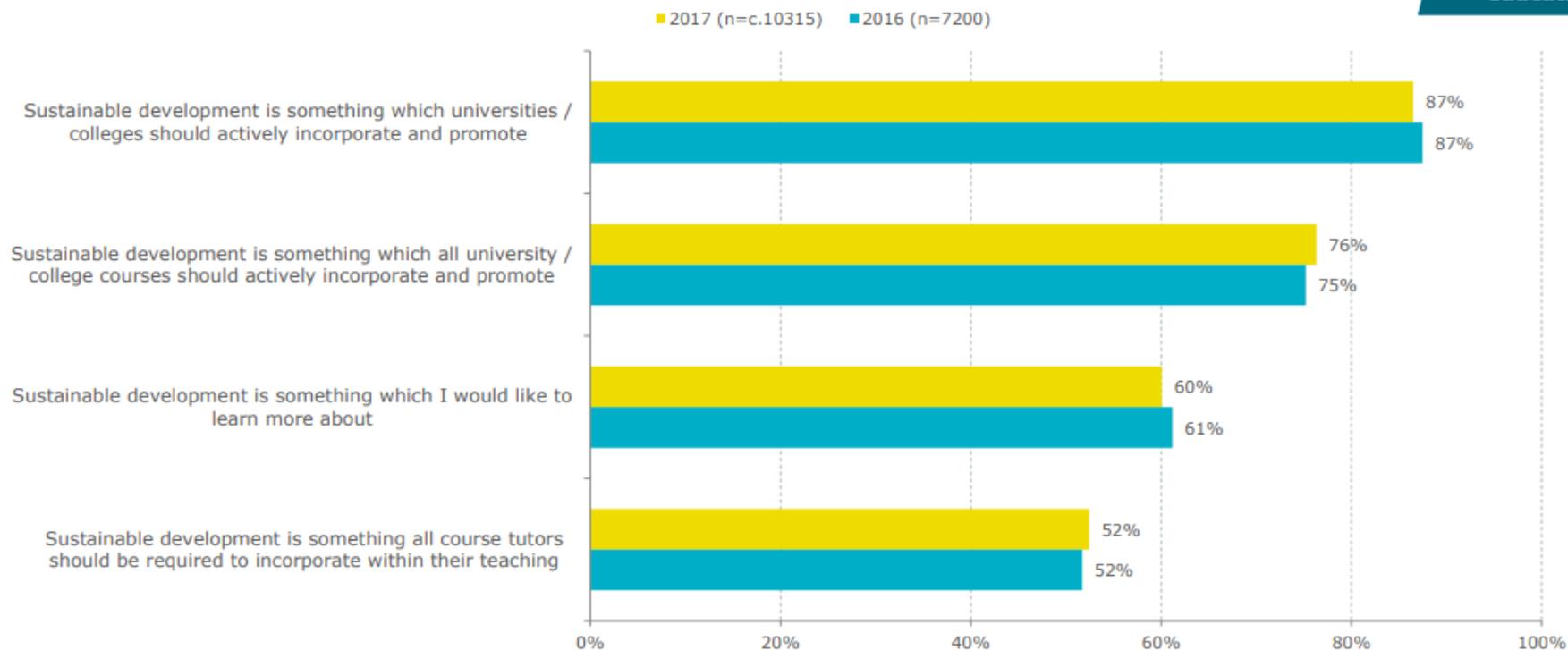
Students expressed a desire for courses to include sustainable development.

International students show higher levels of interest in ESD.

(NUS, Sustainability Skills, 2016-17)

## Do students expect universities / colleges to take action on sustainability?

Higher education



As with previous rounds of research completed with HE students, there is overwhelming agreement that sustainable development is something that universities and colleges should actively incorporate and promote with 87% (n=9205) saying they agree with this statement.

Three quarters (76%, n=8100) also agree that sustainability is something all courses should actively incorporate and promote, however just over half agree that course tutors should be required to incorporate sustainable development within their teaching (52%, n=5570).

Just under two thirds agree that sustainable development is something they would like to learn more about (60%, n=6375).

- Differences by respondent characteristics (2016/17)**
- International respondents from outside of the EU are more likely to agree with all statements compared to UK respondents and international respondents from within the EU. EU international respondents are also more likely to agree with all statements compared to UK respondents.
  - For example, international respondents from outside the EU are more likely to agree that sustainable development is something universities and colleges should actively incorporate and promote (e.g. 86% (n=7563) UK respondents agree compared with 88% (n=799) non-EU international respondents).
  - UK respondents are less likely to agree that sustainable development is something they would like to learn more about, compared with international respondents both from within and beyond the EU (e.g. 58% (n=5069) UK respondents agree compared with 67% (n=572) EU respondents and 73% (n=664) non-EU respondents).
  - Women respondents are more likely than men to agree that they would like to learn more about sustainable development (at a 95% confidence level) with 63% (n=3562) agreeing compared with 57% (n=2698) men.

Q: Taking a definition of sustainable development as: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". To what extent, if at all, would you say that you personally agree with the following statements?

Weighted base:(In brackets). Balance: No response



# What's involved?

UNESCO identified 8 key competencies based around:

Ways of thinking

Ways of practicing

Ways of being



UNESCO



# Ways of thinking

Competency	A student who displays this competency can:
Systems thinking competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognise and understand relationships</li> <li>analyse complex systems</li> <li>consider how systems are embedded within different domains and scales</li> <li>deal with uncertainty</li> </ul>
Anticipatory competency (Future thinking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understand and evaluate multiple outcomes</li> <li>create their own visions for the future</li> <li>apply the precautionary principle</li> <li>assess the consequences of actions</li> <li>deal with risks and changes</li> </ul>
Critical thinking competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>question norms, practices and opinions</li> <li>reflect on one's own values, perceptions and actions</li> <li>take a position in the sustainable development discourse</li> </ul>

Ways of thinking



Image on right: UNESCO  
Table: Advance HE & QAA, adapted from UNESCO





# Ways of practicing

Strategic competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop and implement innovative actions that further sustainable development at the local level and further afield</li> </ul>
Collaboration competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learn from others (including peers, and others inside and outside of their institution)</li> <li>understand and respect the needs, perspectives and actions of others</li> <li>deal with conflicts in a group</li> <li>facilitate collaborative and participatory problem solving</li> </ul>
Integrated problem-solving competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apply different problem-solving frameworks to complex sustainable development problems</li> <li>develop viable, inclusive and equitable solutions</li> <li>utilise appropriate competencies to solve problems</li> </ul>

Ways of practicing



Image on right: UNESCO  
Table: Advance HE & QAA, adapted from UNESCO





# Ways of being

Competency	A student who displays this competency can:
Self-awareness competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflect on their own values, perceptions and actions</li> <li>reflect on their own role in the local community and global society</li> <li>continually evaluate and further motivate their actions</li> <li>deal with their feelings and desires</li> </ul>
Normative competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understand and reflect on the norms and values that underlie one's actions</li> <li>negotiate sustainable development values, principles, goals and targets, in a context of conflicts of interests and trade-offs, uncertain knowledge and contradictions</li> </ul>

Ways of being



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# Educational considerations

Global citizens – different lived experiences of environmental, economic & social issues

Future jobs – sustainability is becoming a bigger element of many jobs.

Green skills – we give learners skills & knowledge they need to succeed. More likely in larger organisations.

Climate and social anxiety – be pragmatic and encourage hope wherever possible

How do the 8 competencies impact your subject areas?

How will you integrate these into what and how you teach?



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# Group task

As a group consider how your different subject areas could collaborate to get students to explore interdisciplinary issues using these 8 competencies.

20 minutes



# Key competencies

**Anticipatory competency:** the abilities to understand and evaluate multiple futures – possible, probable and desirable; to create one's own visions for the future; to apply the precautionary principle; to assess the consequences of actions; and to deal with risks and changes.

**Strategic competency:** the abilities to collectively develop and implement innovative actions that further sustainability at the local level and further afield.

**Collaboration competency:** the abilities to learn from others; to understand and respect the needs, perspectives and actions of others (empathy); to understand, relate to and be sensitive to others (empathic leadership); to deal with conflicts in a group; and to facilitate collaborative and participatory problem solving.

**Critical thinking competency:** the ability to question norms, practices and opinions; to reflect on own one's values, perceptions and actions; and to take a position in the sustainability discourse.

**Systems thinking competency:** the abilities to recognize and understand relationships; to analyse complex systems; to think of how systems are embedded within different domains and different scales; and to deal with uncertainty.

**Normative competency:** the abilities to understand and reflect on the norms and values that underlie one's actions; and to negotiate sustainability values, principles, goals, and targets, in a context of conflicts of interests and trade-offs, uncertain knowledge and contradictions.

**Self-awareness competency:** the ability to reflect on one's own role in the local community and (global) society; to continually evaluate and further motivate one's actions; and to deal with one's feelings and desires.

**Integrated problem-solving competency:** the overarching ability to apply different problem-solving frameworks to complex sustainability problems and develop viable, inclusive and equitable solution options that promote sustainable development, integrating the abovementioned competences."



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# Other resources

[Advance HE Sustainable Development Knowledge Hub](#)

[Advance HE & QAA, Education for Sustainable Development Guidance, Executive Summary, 2021](#)

[UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Goals: learning objectives, 2017](#)

[NUS, Sustainability Skills 2016-17, 2018](#)

All hyperlinks



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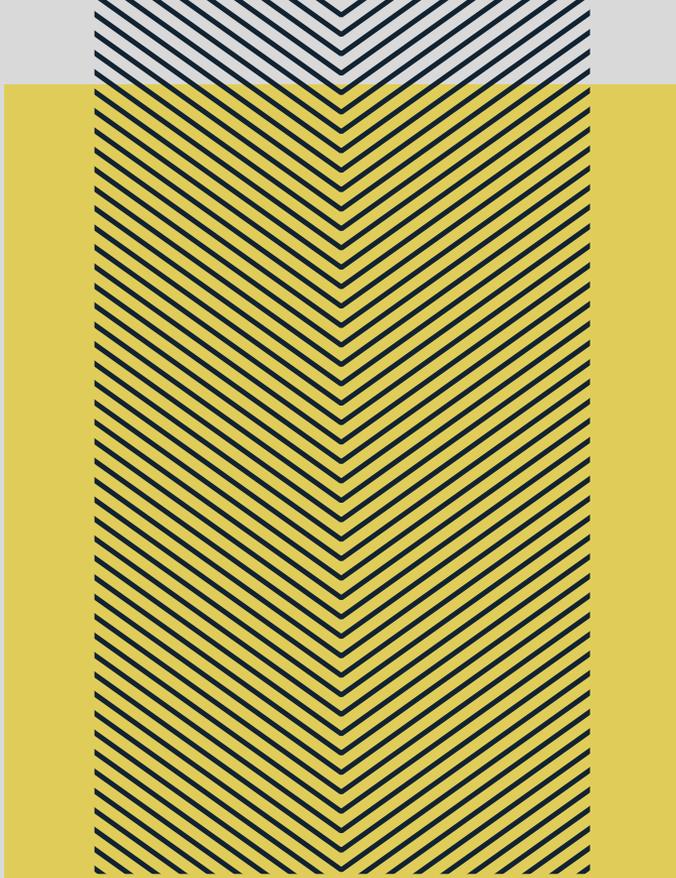


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# Buckinghamshire New University PowerPoint Presentation Template

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