

## Institution

Cardiff University

## What we did

### Institutional Context

Work was led by the Academic Lead for Education for Sustainable Development.

Cardiff University has acknowledged its strategic commitment to a sustainable future in terms of its research activities, its operations and its education through signature of the SDG Accord in 2018 and a declaration of a climate emergency in 2019. This has resulted in a commitment to delivering carbon neutrality in (Scopes 1 and 2) by 2030 and for scope 3 no later than 2050 and a breadth of activities to enable the embedding sustainability into everything we do.

At the time of this project the university had appointed its first Academic Lead for Education for Sustainable Development who, in collaboration with Cardiff's Dean for Environmental Sustainability sought clarity of commitment in a reframed "Way Forward 2021-23" strategic document as well as the environmental and education sub-strategies. *"We will be known as a University which values, promotes and embeds sustainability in education, enabling students and staff to make positive changes to our environment."* This work has resulted in a draft action plan for the embedding of Education for Sustainable Development across the Cardiff University Curricula and Student Experience: 2021-24 was developed, ESD champions in all academic schools were recruited and an ESD Steering Board established within the formal education governance structures. In addition the graduate attributes (an initiative of the Dean for Employability and the Successful Student Futures team), developed and agreed this set of six skills categories valued by industry and most wanted by employers and that the institution commits to ensure all students have the opportunity to acquire through their studies includes the theme: Ethically, socially and environmentally aware; a further explicit commitment to the very essence of ESD.

At this time the Cardiff Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA) began its work to provide clarity on expectations for all Cardiff University teaching and learning activities, within which one of the underlying themes of which includes an embedded toolkit for ESD, expressing clear commitment to our academic staff of the need to work towards our ESD embeddedness in all programmes of study. Educational CPD to support this transition is planned alongside further explicit expectations to be embedded within the Institutional Expectations for Institutional expectations for programme structure, design, and delivery.

The University's strategic commitment to sustainability and ESD in particular has informed 2 submissions to date to the Times Higher Education Impact rankings (2023 submission resulted in an equal 52 global ranking) as well as the QAA sustainability ranking (ranked 25<sup>th</sup> Globally). The ESD champions in all schools have identified examples of good ESD practice in all schools and the activities of the LTA. This project was timely in supporting the activities described to date in working towards alignment of ESD to staff and student academic quality processes with a hope that the outputs will provide templates for clearer requirements for the support of future opportunities in relation to ESD.

### Initial engagements with colleagues and students

A summary of engagements with the project lead providing data for analysis is listed below:

Date	Attendees	Focus	Supporting Documents
27.10.2022	1 member of the Students Union executive, professional services lead and academic lead of the student voice team.	The role of Student Voice in delivering ESD / QAA	Meeting 1 Notes

<b>01.11.2022</b>	1 member of central and 2 college Communications and marketing teams.	The role of sustainability in relation to international recruitment & Marketing	Meeting 2 Notes
<b>02.11.2022</b>	2 professional services leads for quality	ESD and Quality processes	Meeting 3 Notes
<b>07.11.2022</b>	4 college Education Deans	Educational development and approval processes and ESD	Meeting 4 Notes
<b>07.11.2022</b>	2 professional services college leads for quality	ESD and Quality processes – a college perspective	Meeting 5 Notes
<b>14.11.2022</b>	2 professional services leads for education and student experience	Educational development and approval processes and ESD	Meeting 6 Notes
<b>02.12.2022</b>	2 chairs of the programme approval panel	The embedding of ESD within programme approval processes	Meeting 7 Notes

Some key conclusions drawn from those discussions were:

- Identified that there is not a clear commitment for ESD in traditional sector wide student voice activities – a key example is that the ESD relevant questions for the NSS is not part of the core question set. Without this sector wide commitment, it is difficult to ensure its place in a particular institution. Especially where hygiene / practical factors are still so high on student voice incentive.
- In relation to marketing, communications and recruitment, the most significant factor to address is the impact of international students on travel emissions. A brave message is required in terms of commitment to education for sustainable development to ensure both disciplinary and wider social economic and environmental sustainability education to counter this very immediate and impactful communications conundrum. This needs to be an authentic value of the institution, with outwards facing evidence or research education and operations all aligned and active in the support of sustainability values. Becoming a good global citizen is perhaps the message that could be used here, alongside statements of and commitment to sustainability values for the organisation, staff and students. PDR may have a role in ensuring that this value is embedded for staff.
- For QAA processes across the institution, embedding within the institutional expectations documentation and associated resources is key to delivery of ESD across educational provision. It cannot be an add-on. There is a need to go beyond guidance and provide solid requirements. This will help to bring along all colleagues, as will appropriate training – for example it is likely that Programme approval panel chairs would benefit from clear training once IE requirements are updated. Critique / academic engagement with the topic will also be necessary to ensure that academic engagement is achieved, rather than a tick box process delivered.
- There is a need to really partner with students and the student union in order to understand what students are expecting in relation to sustainability. Alignment with the Curriculum for Wales – with 4 core principles including to education Ethically informed citizens could be a strategically important factor, as students in Wales will be expecting ESD.
- Alignment with the Student Futures (Careers Service) and the graduate attributes is potentially powerful – with a need for sustainability literacy throughout this context. There is potential in the idea of a university wide reading week – where study skills are currently addressed in one college – other aspects including global citizenship and sustainability literacy could also be considered.
- There is a need for advice on how ESD might best be embedded within learning outcomes to enable QAA processes to support this work. Good practice examples across the range of disciplines and levels would be really helpful to see.
- It is important to ensure that ESD is an agenda for all Boards of studies to ensure that it is discussed regularly in all schools. Changes to Terms of reference and agendas for all committees across the institution, placing sustainability on the agenda, is likely to enable this. But membership also needs to be informed. This indicates the need for training for staff to ensure informed debate.

## Enhancements carried out

Building upon the initial meetings and other ongoing institutional and College-based discussions, several enhancements are now being pursued which, as noted below, are at different stages of implementation. While further capacity building and resources will be required to implement these enhancements fully.

Enhancement	Summary	Status	Supporting Documents
<b>1: Revision, extension and approval of action plan</b>	The action plan has been discussed and debated by the networks of ESD champions and ESD Steering Board. A revised plan is due in Summer 2023 (Delayed by Sick leave) and will be informed by this project. This will be key to ensuring strategic commitment – new VC’s arrival in September is timely for this.	Ongoing	.
<b>2. Application of Graduate attributes mapping with programme approval process.</b>	Embedding of graduate attributes within the programme approval process includes requirement to map all module learning outcomes against the graduate attributes.	Completed	Graduate Attributes mapping document.
<b>3. Revision of institutional expectations document</b>	A first step of this has been completed with the graduate attributes having been embedded within the documentation and the Education development toolkit having ESD embedded as a cross cutting theme. Explicit mention of the SDGs and ESD specifically within the IE remains outstanding.	Ongoing	Insitutional Expectations – available online.
<b>4. Marketing and comms</b>	Updates to the website to emphasise the Institutions’ commitment to sustainability are imminent including educational and operational case studies. A year-long campaign to ensure that this commitment remains apparent is planned.	Ongoing	
<b>5: Revision extension and approval of action plan</b>	An away day was held with key stakeholders for ESD across the institution focussing on the draft action plan and reviewing and revising in terms on content, as well prioritisation. A revised action plan will be reviewed and approval sought for its adoption in the Autumn / winter 2023.	Paused – Due to sick leave of Academic lead.	
<b>7: Toolkit development</b>	Version 1 of the CU’s Education Development Service’s Toolkit has been produced with ESD as one of the overarching themes. This has been released across the institution in “beta” version and is currently being reviewed and revised in consultation with ESD champions.	Ongoing	
<b>6: CPD</b>	An introduction training session for those Academics interested in ESD has been produced. This will be formally launched in the summer 2023. Further to this a training needs analysis is being done for all staff and students in the context of sustainability, led by the Environmental Sustainability sub Committee. Decisions will then be taken as to the best course of action for training in this context for the institution.	Drafted / Ongoing	

<b>8: Induction activity – development – Student internship project project</b>	A student internship that aims to develop the framework and structure for a sustainability focused group Induction activity for 1st year Cardiff University Students. This aims to enable students to build communities and a sense of belonging within their school and cohort during the induction period while engaging with the important topic of Sustainability and the climate emergency.	Currently taking place	
<b>9. Web Based Publication of ESD / SDG education case studies</b>	Having gathered a range of case studies across the breadth of disciplines and the SDGs these are now to be published on the website in order to advertise to students and staff alike that ESD is possible and already delivered across many programmes.	Case studies collated / Web page drafted / to go live in Summer 2023.	

Many of the enhancements (above) are ongoing and will require further time, resources and staff and student consultation in order to implement fully. The finalised ESD action plan 2023-25 (due October 2023) will ensure commitment and continued monitoring of progress against these targets.

## Learnings and Conclusions for addressing ESD through AQ and SV

The work outlined above has highlighted several issues of relevance for wider work on ESD.

- An embedded and coherent set of processes and resources is required to enable delivery of ESD throughout the curriculum. This needs to be both supportive – CPD, toolkits and support as well as procedural – institutional expectations, programme approval processes.
- It is necessary for strategic and visible commitments to be supported by ongoing communications and visible signs of change in both operations and core activities (education and research) in order for both staff and students to believe the verbal commitments mean something.
- In order for the delivery of this work to be monitored and reviewed by senior management there is a need for a metric of success. This is as yet unclear as there are concerns with methods used to date to evaluate embeddedness of ESD in educational portfolios to date.

## Outcomes and Next Steps for internal activities

Building on the work outline above, short term priorities at Cardiff University include:

- In relation to ESD and student voice - A tiered rep system could support further embedding of ESD – for example – “Champions” for different themes. These could have close working relationships with directors in schools and networks to address themes. Paying students for this enhanced contribution *could support this implementation*.
- Embedding ESD into the new curriculum design, validation and review processes to ensure alignment with the Curriculum Design Framework, and the piloting/evaluation of these in the 2023-24 academic year.
- Enhanced guidance resources to support the above, in tandem with support workshops.
- Further discussions with the Students Union on embedding ESD into the course representative process, including the core rep training – and engagement with Responsible Futures accreditation scheme.
- Introduction of annual review and monitoring of ESD embeddedness – seeking work towards best practice in this area.