Institution

University of Derby (UoD)

What we did

Institutional Context

Work was led by the Pedagogic Lead for Education for Sustainable Development, working with a member of UoD's Centre for Quality Assurance.

Following a wide-ranging consultation (elongated by the COVID pandemic), UoD launched two new overarching frameworks for its taught provision in time for the start of the 2022-23 academic year. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework (LTAF) identifies five factors of success to be embedded into all programmes. The Curriculum Design Framework (CDF) focuses on four content themes for all UoD courses. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is one of these themes. The transition towards implementing these two frameworks has now begun and is reflected in the emerging enhancement activities listed in the section below.

The University's recent strategic commitment to ESD has been underpinned by a growth in sustainability-related learning, teaching and assessment practice in the preceding years. Evidence of this progress includes the achievement of Responsible Futures accreditation for the first time in the summer of 2022, and a top ten position for the last two years in SOS-UK's SDG Teach In (as measured by the number of pledges to teach about the Sustainable Development Goals during the survey period). ESD practice has emerged across all the University's Colleges, with activity in the College of Business, Law and Social Sciences through their engagement with PRME, particularly worthy of mention.

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
June 2022	1 Student Union staff member	Student voice mechanisms and the role of elected student officers	Meeting 1 Notes
June 2022	1 Student Union staff member	Course representative processes	Meeting 2 Notes
Nov 2022	3 members of CQA team	Role of AQ processes and staff	Meeting 3 Notes

Some key conclusions drawn from those discussions were:

- The extent to which the Union of Students is a representative organisation and therefore its annual agenda and activities are shaped by the changing priorities of the study body (which may or not be related to sustainability issues).
- A review of topics raised by students as part of the course representative process during the 2021-22 academic year, highlighted that sustainability-related questions and queries seem to be relatively few.
- The Union of Students open to the possibility that there may be some guidance content related to sustainability in future versions of course rep training.
- Validation, revalidation and programme review: work has begun on refining these processes to align with the requirements of the LTAF and CDF. This will help to bring ESD into sharper focus. Alignment to the newly configured subject benchmark statements will be required, which will also help to up the profile of ESD to programme teams.
- Continual monitoring: review of CM has occurred with a more streamlined process now in place. There is no specific requirement to address ESD within any of the CM templates presently. CM design has been strongly influenced by the QAA quality code and OFS conditions of registration.

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. Typically, moves towards implementing the LTAF and CDF has been the key catalyst for change.

Enhancement	Summary	Status	Supporting Documents
1: Revised programme evaluation form.	This student feedback survey is completed towards the end of the year by Foundation, first- and second-year undergraduate students. This now includes a question about the profile of sustainability within course content.	Completed and implemented March-April 2023.	UoD001
2: ESD added as a reference point in the University's Continual Monitoring guidance notes.	Reference to ESD, alongside the other three curriculum design principles, now included in the programme-level guidance notes.	Drafted	UoD002
3: ESD baseline criteria, aligned to the CDF, for all programmes in the College of Business, Law and Social Sciences.	Five criteria related to ESD, including a focus on the SDGs, sustainability competencies and ESD-related assessment exercises. These criteria will be used annually as part of the programme review process.	Drafted and being piloted. April 2023 onwards.	UoD003
4. ESD is now a key component of the new 60 credit postgraduate Academic Practice and Leadership programme.	This programme is for all newly appointed, permanent teaching staff at UoD who are relatively new to teaching in HE. Unit 5 (online, asynchronous content) in the first module is called 'Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in HE, and its relationship to social justice.'	Completed. Delivery began Feb 2023.	
5: Participant in the ESD bootcamp 2023 (https://aldesd.org/bootcamp-2023/)	A team from UoD working on the greater embedding of ESD into the University's iPGCE programme.	Current, began March 2023.	

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.

- A strategic-level and visible commitment to ESD is central to progressing embedding ESD into the curricula. Even though the University's Curriculum Design Framework is still in its first year of implementation, it is already acting as a catalyst for change.
- The inclusion of prompts related to ESD in curriculum validation and review processes is important, but this must be aligned to enhanced staff understanding of ESD, including for all those involved in these QA processes.
- If ESD is to have a higher profile within continual monitoring processes in the future, then quantifiable/measurable outcomes are desirable, e.g. alignment to the UN-SDGs and/or a list of sustainability competencies.
- Discussion of sustainability issues within course representative processes seem largely restricted to programmes which have significant sustainability-related content. More structured support and guidance to embed consideration of ESD within these mechanisms is needed.

Outcomes and Next Steps for internal activities

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

- Embedding ESD into the new curriculum design, review and validation 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 the support the above, in tandem with support workshops.
- Further discussions with the Union of Students on embedding ESD into the course representative process, including the core rep training.