

Guidance on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at the University of Bristol

Definition of ESD

The University has based its understanding of ESD on the UNESCO definition which covers four main areas: social and economic justice; cultural diversity; human rights of future generations; and the protection and restoration of the Earth's ecosystems.

The specific values are:

- Respect for the dignity and human rights of all people throughout the world and a commitment to social and economic justice for all;
- Respect for cultural diversity and a commitment to build locally and globally a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace;
- Respect for the human rights of future generations and a commitment to intergenerational responsibility;
- Respect and care for the greater community of life in all its diversity which involves the protection and restoration of the Earth's ecosystems.

Students should gain an understanding of the long-term impact they currently have, and will have, in their future personal and professional life, on the environment and how to live within the earth's limits.

ESD encompasses more than just environmental factors also including social, economic, ethical and cultural values. This covers our whole system of beliefs, values, attitudes, customs and institution shaping our gender, race and other social relations, and affects the way we perceive ourselves and the world and how we interact with other people and the rest of nature. Culture, therefore, has a central place in the complex notion of sustainability – and whatever form the future takes, it will be shaped at the local level by the mosaic of cultures that surround the globe and which contribute to the decisions that each country, community, household and individual makes.

The UNESCO framework also stresses the importance of critical thinking, inter-disciplinary, multi-method approaches to assessment and challenging approaches to, and ideas about, teaching and learning.

ESD within the Unit & Programme Management System (UPMS)

You can use the UPMS to update existing units or create new units and include information on the unit's ESD content. You are provided with a number of elective options:

- Is ESD included in this unit? - Yes/No
- What percentage of contact hours include ESD? - 0-100%

- What percentage of independent research/essays/essays include ESD? - 0-100%
- Type of ESD: select from – Social/Cultural, Political, Economic, Environmental
- Free text field for additional information on ESD

You may find some information has already been added to the system by the ESD team. You are welcome to update and amend any such information or get in contact to discuss the answers with the team, esd-team@bristol.ac.uk.

The data captured will be used by the ESD team for regular reporting in order to monitor and measure ESD within the formal curriculum. It may also contribute towards:

- Exposing UG and taught PG experience of ESD – PG experience is typically difficult to track;
- Achieving Environmental Management Systems (EMS) ISO14000 accreditation;
- Addressing UoB ESD Strategy action points;
- Badging / recognising ESD efforts ;
- Incorporating data automatically into handbooks and course lists;
- Marketing (use this data as a promotional tool to attract students and promote UoB innovation);
- Demonstrating UoB as competitive – growing HE interest in ESD;
- Achieving university league table points.

Further considerations

The University's Policy and Strategy for Sustainability commits the institution to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and aims to:

Integrate environmental and sustainability principles into the University's operational procedures, educational activities and research endeavours, promoting best practice at every level.

The University's ESD Strategy aims to:

- Seek synergies and opportunities to align the institution's activity in the field of sustainability with research and teaching being undertaken into aspects of sustainability;
- To ensure all students have an opportunity to develop an understanding of sustainability and have an integrated experience of theory and practice in their formal, informal and subliminal curriculum.

Read more: https://www.bris.ac.uk/environment/esd/esd_strategy

There is no universal model of ESD and there will be differences based on local contexts, priorities and approaches. The HEA points to the *contested nature of*

sustainability (providing) an opportunity to develop learning activities and explore debates over the issues at stake.

You may find the HEA/QAA *Education for sustainable development: Guidance for UK higher education providers* particularly useful:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Education-sustainable-development-Guidance-June-14.pdf>.

The University has pledged to ensure that all students encounter sustainability during their time studying and has signed up to a UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP) Commitment. GAP seeks to generate and scale-up ESD action. It is intended to make a substantial contribution to the post-2015 agenda. The overall goal of the GAP is to generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education and learning to accelerate progress towards sustainable development.

The GAP has two objectives:

- To reorient education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development – and make a difference;
- To strengthen education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development.

The GAP will focus on five priority action areas:

- Advancing policy;
- Integrating sustainability practices into education and training environments (whole-institution approaches);
- Increasing the capacity of educators and trainers;
- Empowering and mobilizing youth;
- Encouraging local communities and municipal authorities to develop community-based ESD programmes.

Read more here: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco-world-conference-on-esd-2014/esd-after-2014/global-action-programme/>

Resources

Our wiki resource databank can provide you with detailed information to support the inclusion of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) materials in the formal curriculum, tailored on a subject by subject basis and also inform you of ESD activities at the University.

<https://wikis.bris.ac.uk/display/BristolESD/ESD+at+Bristol>

Please contact esd-team@bristol.ac.uk for further information.