

STUDENT-LED SUSTAINABILITY CURRICULUM MAPPING

Mapping formal curricula against the UN Sustainable Development Goals, education for sustainable development (ESD) methods and wider sustainability learning through a student-led audit



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1. About

The [UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) set out a holistic framework for creating a more just and sustainable future for all. They are a universal set of goals, targets, and indicators that UN member states will be expected to use to frame their agendas and political policies from 2015-2030.

Educational institutions across the UK are increasingly examining how they might **map their practices onto the SDGs**. We know there is significant demand from students for greater inclusion of sustainability, in its broadest sense, in teaching and learning.

79% of tertiary education students in the UK would like to see sustainable development incorporated and promoted through all courses.

SOS-UK Sustainability Skills Survey 2021-22

In response to this institutional and student demand, the University of Winchester and National Union of Students developed a **training and support package for mapping the curriculum to the SDGs and wider sustainability learning through a student-led audit**. This support package is now led and facilitated by [Students Organising for Sustainability \(SOS-UK\)](#), a charity launched by NUS staff and officers in 2019 in response to the climate and ecological crisis.

In 2022-23, SOS-UK worked with the University of Liverpool Management School and Liverpool Guild of Students to pilot a year-long student-led methodology to map the SDGs and wider sustainability learning in teaching and learning (more details in section 2 “How it works”).

We know students want to learn more about sustainable development, but we also understand this knowledge needs to be translated into agency to take action and contribute to sustainable development. To support universities and colleges to deliver on this, our curriculum mapping methodology audits both content and pedagogies, adopting principles of [education for sustainable development \(ESD\)](#) as key criteria for students to map curricula against.

“Education for sustainable development is the process of equipping students with the knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes needed to work and live in a way that safeguards environmental, social and economic wellbeing, both in the present and for future generations.” HEA QAA ESD Guidance, 2021

To date, we have worked with students from 12 institutions across the UK to map over 6000 modules.

This support package includes:

- Training for student auditors to enable them to audit the formal curriculum
- Provision of audit outputs (raw data, illustrative data or report depending on level of support - see section 3)

Student-led curriculum mapping can lead to:

- Student knowledge, understanding and transferable skill development - sustainability, auditing, team work, data analysis, critical thinking, global citizenship
- Linking the SDGs to other initiatives within the institution and/or students' union
- Engaging teaching staff and senior leadership
- Reporting on the SDGs
- Identifying areas of good practice, and areas for improvement

See section 3 for more information on the different tiers of support available.

2. How it works

We have developed two methodologies to support students to lead on mapping their curricula against the SDGs and other sustainability criteria.

Module descriptor methodology

This methodology supports students to map module descriptors, course handbooks and reading lists against the SDGs, wider aspects of sustainability learning and ESD methods using an online mapping form.

The scope of the audit (i.e., number and type of modules mapped, deadlines etc.) will be determined in partnership with the institution and students' union and can vary based on needs, student engagement, and access to information.

The extent of the audit will need to be based on the number of student auditors and the agreed expectations of their time commitment for the audit. It is estimated that each trained student auditor will be able to map 5-10 individual modules per hour following the training, but this will vary depending on complexity and available information.

SOS-UK will adapt and prepare training materials to support the curriculum audit.

Student experience methodology

This methodology supports students to map their weekly experiences of teaching and learning in their modules for either a semester, or the entire year using an online mapping form or spreadsheet.

The scope of the audit (i.e., number of students and modules mapped, deadlines etc.) will be determined in partnership with the institution and students' union and can vary based on needs and student engagement.

Training student auditors

This is a student-led audit, for which students are trained and supported by SOS-UK staff. SOS-UK staff bring expertise on student engagement and training, sustainability and education to equip participating students with the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to be empowered as auditors of formal curricula at your institution.

This 3-hour interactive training workshop is designed to enable student auditors to engage proactively in future initiatives relating to ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) and the UN SDGs. During the training students will be supported to understand the mapping process including their roles and responsibilities. Training will be tailored to the institutional context and student experience, depending on the methodology being used.

Student engagement

To ensure this opportunity is accessible for the greatest number of students, and to increase potential for sufficient number of auditors, it is advised the university, college or students' union provides remuneration or equivalent for the student auditors' time. In the past this has been in the form of the real living wage, book vouchers, tokens, HEAR credits or points towards a volunteering award. There is potential for this to be built into course rep roles, or as part of an academic project. **Through SOS-UK, students will receive a digital badge acknowledging their contribution to sustainability as an "Education for Sustainable Development Auditor."**

Students will map curricula against the 17 UN sustainable development goals and Education for Sustainable Development methods and pedagogies. Additional criteria for the audit review can be agreed in advance of the audit, in the past this has included an institution's values and ideals.

Audit output

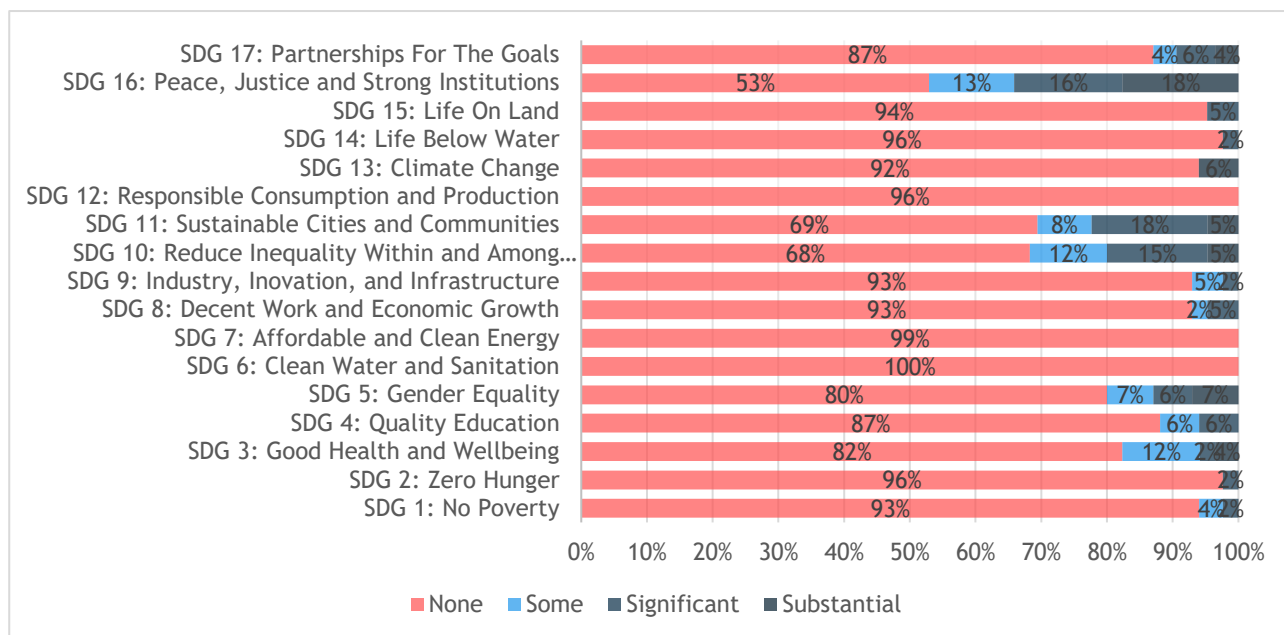
This curriculum audit will seek to identify where and how SDGs, ESD methods and pedagogies and any other variables agreed with the institution and students' union are currently embedded in formal curricula.

See section 3 below for the three tiers of support offered by SOS-UK.

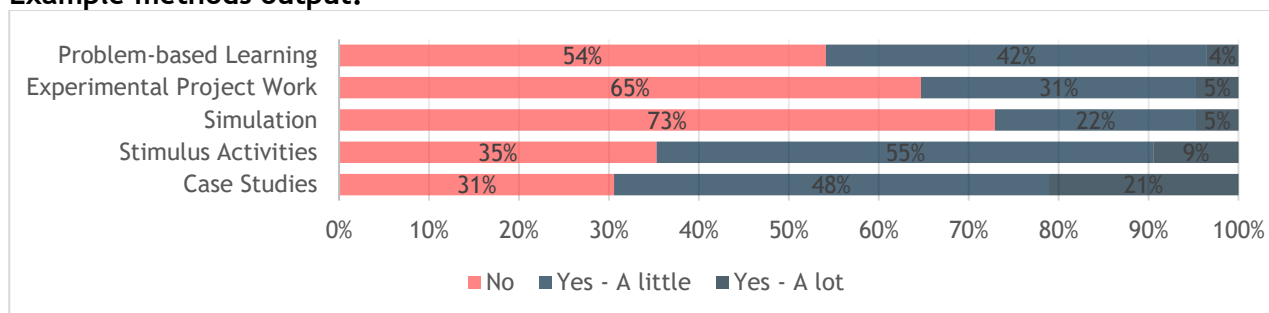
- For tier 1, institutions will receive raw data from the audit.
- For tier 2, data will be presented in the form of graphs and charts
- For tier 3, SOS-UK will produce a full audit report utilising the data produced by student auditors and present report to the institution.

For the tier 3 audit report, results will be summarised through an engaging report which will share students' findings and provide an analysis of where and how the SDGs, ESD methods and pedagogies and any other variables agreed with the institution and students' union have been included in modules/programmes. This report will be fed into by student auditors and summarised by SOS-UK.

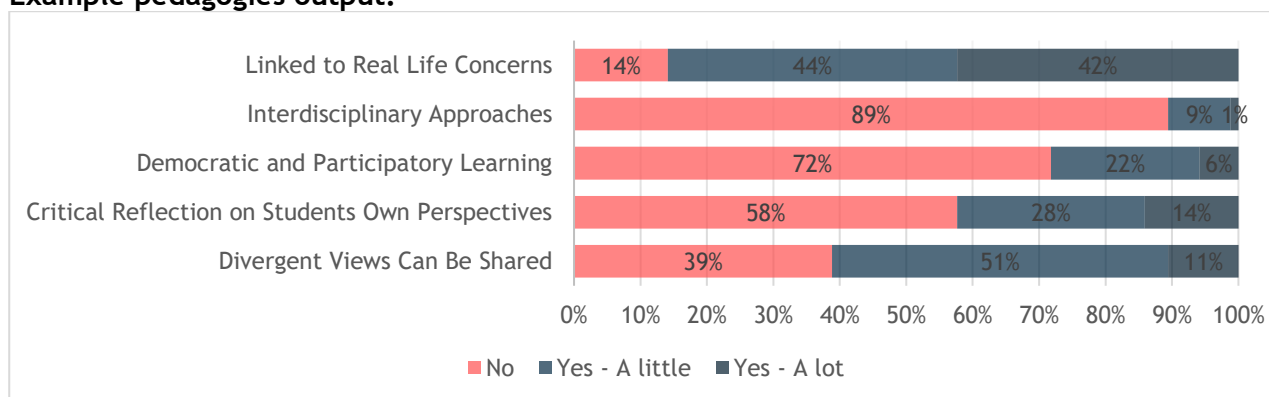
Example UN SDGs output:



Example methods output:



Example pedagogies output:



3. Support offerings and costs

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Included	Preparation of training materials, training delivery, pre- and post- surveying of student auditors, raw audit data, ad hoc support.	Tier 1 offer, plus: management of auditor recruitment, graphic representation of results (e.g., graphs and charts for use in a report or presentation), two-three informal student-check ins*.	Tier 2 offer, plus: ongoing support of students, full audit report, workshop with staff and senior leaders to explain rationale and review results

*Student check-ins are available for institutions using the student experience methodology.

		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Module descriptor methodology	Whole institution cost	£2,100 + VAT	£2,955 + VAT	£5,040 + VAT
	Single-faculty cost	£1,755 + VAT	£2,325 + VAT	£4,275 + VAT
Student experience methodology	Whole institution cost	£3,150 + VAT	£4,085 + VAT	£6,360 + VAT
	Single-faculty cost	£2,460 + VAT	£3,185 + VAT	£5,105 + VAT

Please note, we are able to develop bespoke support packages based on your institutional context.

Interested students' unions and institutions should get in touch for more information and to discuss scope and determine cost. Contact: Sonya Peres, Senior Project Manager - Education, sonya.peres@sos-uk.org.

To sign-up for this support package, please complete the online form: <https://www.sos-uk.org/programme-sign-up>