



STUDENTS
ORGANISING FOR
SUSTAINABILITY
UNITED KINGDOM

SDG CURRICULUM MAPPING

Mapping formal curricula against the UN Sustainable Development Goals through a student-led audit



1. About

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out a framework for eliminating poverty, taking action on climate change, and 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.

Universities, colleges, and students' unions 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 the formal curriculum.

83% of tertiary education students in the UK would like to see sustainable development incorporated and promoted through all courses.

NUS/SOS-UK Sustainability skills survey, 2020¹

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 through a student-led audit**. This support package is now led and facilitated by [Students Organising for Sustainability \(SOS-UK\)](https://www.sos-uk.org), a charity launched by NUS staff and officers in 2019 in response to the climate and ecological crisis.

“[The SDGs] should act as an entry-point for students and teaching staff alike, to identify the links between their discipline and the issues central to sustainability... we encourage students and educators to engage in

¹ Sustainability Skills survey, 2020: <https://www.sos-uk.org/research/sustainability-skills-survey>

participatory, inclusive, creative, critical, and transformative learning experiences.” Rob Young, NUS VP Society and Citizenship, 2016-2018

We know students want to learn more about sustainable development, but we also understand this knowledge needs to be translated into agency. To support universities and colleges to deliver on this, SDG curriculum mapping will audit 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, 2014

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 skill development - sustainability, auditing, team work, data analysis
- Linking the SDGs to other initiatives within the institution and/or students' union
- Engaging teaching staff
- 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

2.1 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 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 audit approximately 5-6 modules/courses/programmes to identify where and how the 17 SDGs are being taught and embedded. Further auditing will take place after the workshop through students' independent working.

2.2 Curriculum audit

Through the student training and ongoing engagement by student auditors, all modules and programmes can be audited, but the scope of the audit will be determined in partnership with the institution and students' union and can vary based on needs, student engagement, and access to information.

In advance of the training, it will be agreed between SOS-UK and the institution/students' union the scope of the audit - module, course or programme level and anticipated number to be audited by students. 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 will be able to map 5-10 individual modules per hour following the training, but this will vary depending on complexity and available information.

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.

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.

2.3 Audit output

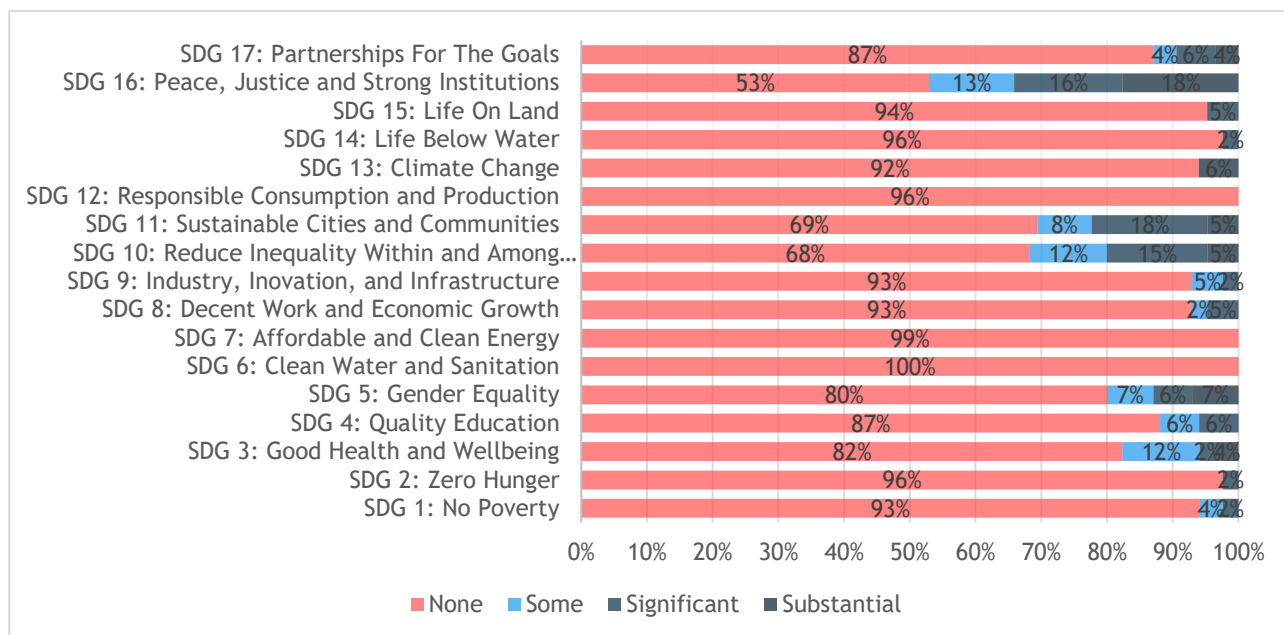
This curriculum audit will seek to identify where and how SDGs, ESD methods and pedagogies and any other variables agreed with the institution and students' union are currently embedded in formal curricula.

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

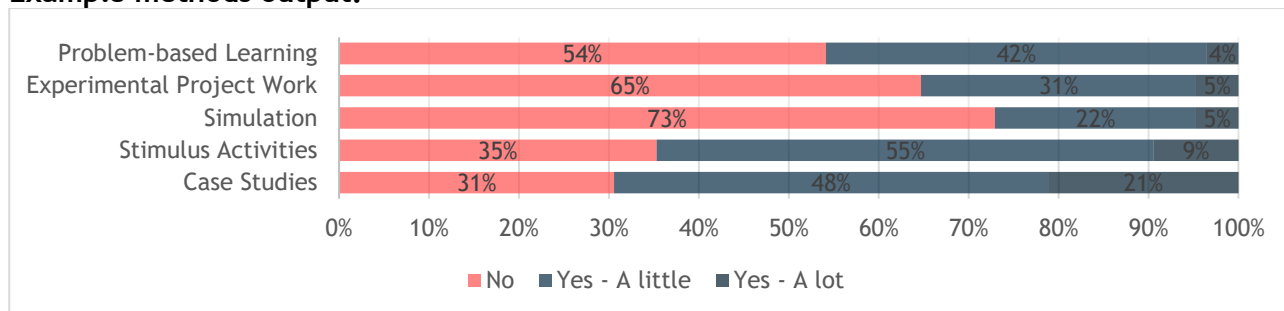
- For tier 1, institutions will receive raw data from the audit.
- For tier 2, data will be presented in the form of graphs and charts
- For tier 3, SOS-UK will produce a full audit report utilising the data produced by student auditors.

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.

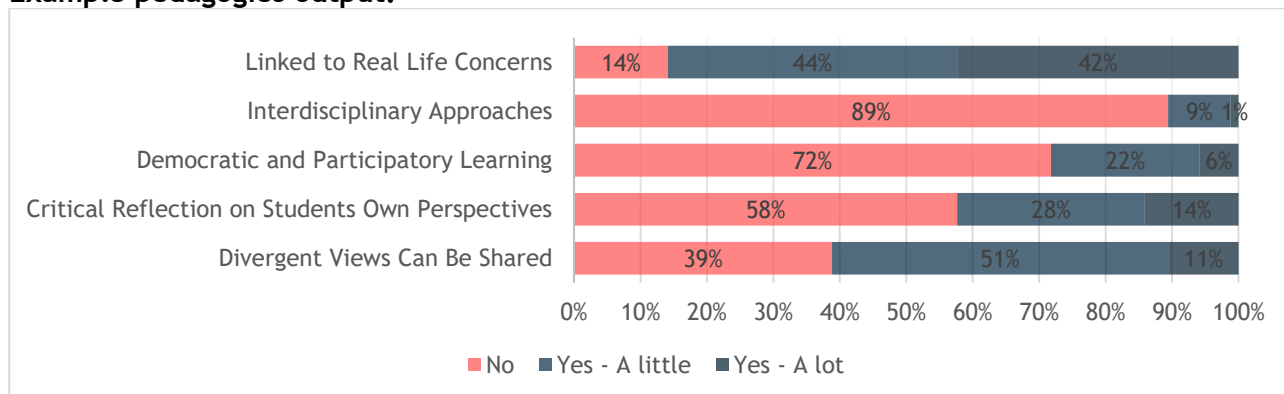
Example UN SDGs output:



Example methods output:



Example pedagogies output:



3. Support offerings

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Included	Preparation of training materials, training delivery, pre- and post- surveying of student auditors, raw audit data.	Tier 1 offer, plus: management of auditor recruitment, graphic representation of results (e.g. graphs and charts for use in a report or presentation).	Tier 2 offer, plus: ongoing support of students, full audit report, workshop with staff and senior leaders to explain rationale and review results
Cost (2+ faculties/ whole institution²)	£1,570 +VAT	£2,210 +VAT	£4,770 +VAT
Cost (single faculty)	£1,330 +VAT	£1,810 +VAT	£3,890 +VAT

Interested students' unions and institutions should get in touch for more information and to discuss scope and determine cost. Contact: Rachel Soper, Interim Senior Project Manager - Education, Rachel.soper@sos-uk.org.

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

² Feasibility of a whole-institution curriculum audit will be dependent on student capacity and the number of students it is possible to recruit for the process. Expectations will need to be agreed between SOS-UK and the institution/ SU lead.