



New programme for 2021-22: Education for Sustainable Development changemakers

A student-staff co-creation approach for D3: democratise, decarbonise and decolonise

Democratise education: To engage both students and staff as active participants in the development, creation and facilitation of learning. It promotes establishing mechanisms for engaged learning for both students and staff enabling a process of co-creation. By actively engaging students in a democratised learning experience they are empowered to realise their potential to contribute towards a better world.

Decarbonising education: Transforming how and what we learn so that education sufficiently addresses and prepares students for the climate crisis and ecological emergency. Curricula must equip students with knowledge, skills, attributes, and values to tackle reformation of our currently carbon intense economic system. It means thinking critically and challenging the influence of corporations like fossil fuel companies in our research, funding, and sponsorship.

Decolonising education: Requires individual and institution reflection on power relations, structures, knowledge systems and ways of thinking, teaching, learning and researching that are legacies of colonial systems. Decolonising requires addressing these systems, structures and hierarchies to make way for a paradigm shift that enables all cultures and knowledge systems to be truly integrated into education for climate justice. It goes beyond diversification, calling for deep-seated change.

D3: Recognition that we need to adopt a holistic and integrated approach to how our education institutions address the climate and ecological crisis, this is promoted through joined up approach

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): “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.” *Higher Education Academy & Quality Assurance Agency guidance on ESD (2014)*

Background and context

ESD changemakers seeks to address ‘D3’: democratising, decarbonising and decolonising synergistically in teaching, learning and research. Through the process of active engagement with the learning process and experience, the programme aims to support staff and students so they are equipped with relevant knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes to contribute to a just and sustainable world in the context of their academic discipline. It aims to address student concern about climate change, supporting them to turn concern into agency, and address student demand for sustainable development in their tertiary education courses.

- 90% of university and college students in the UK are very or fairly concerned about climate change.¹
- 91% say they agree their place of study should actively incorporate and promote sustainable development.²
- 83% would like to see sustainable development actively incorporated and promoted through all courses.³

SOS-UK advocates for student leadership and students as co-creators in implementing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) curriculum design and innovation. This is an integral part of the latest QAA and Advance HE [Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\) Guidance](#). We have seen first-hand the impact of empowering students to collaborate on addressing sustainability challenges in their institutions as well as creating spaces for knowledge exchange across the sector to progress ESD. This has been seen through our [Responsible Futures](#) accreditation programme, a pairing model for Responsible Futures audits between institutions and the [British Academy SHAPE Sustainability Impact Projects](#) led by SOS-UK in 2020-21. This programme also complements and our [SDG curriculum mapping intervention](#). We have also taken learnings from a comparable initiative, the [University of British Columbia climate teaching connectors](#).

The programme is open to universities and colleges in partnership with their students' unions to support student-staff partnerships for a co-creation approach to **embedding ESD in teaching, learning and research. This programme has the potential to enhance the role of course/faculty student representatives to shape and influence course development and review processes.**

ESD changemakers runs on an academic year cycle with greatest impact being anticipated where institutions continue with the programme for a period of 3 years minimum (covering the average undergraduate degree programme). It is also encouraged that students continue their roles as changemakers throughout their time at the institution, enabling them to see the culmination of their contributions to curriculum enhancement and transformation realised.

Join a national network of academics and students

In addition to the internal mechanisms for student voice facilitated by ESD changemakers, the programme provides a national cross-disciplinary network of academics and students. We know academics tend to connect with fellow academics from aligned disciplines. ESD changemakers enables academics and students to share learning and pedagogical approaches for embedding sustainability with relevance to their disciplines, whilst also promoting interdisciplinary learning through national networking events throughout the year. Learning from SOS-UK facilitation of British Academy SHAPE Sustainability Impact Projects in 2020-21, students found it incredibly impactful to learn from experiences of peers studying at other institutions, this helped them address sustainability challenges faced by their own institution.

Students

SOS-UK provides training and support through workshops, webinars and regular check-ins with students throughout the programme cycle. Students will be required to complete regular

¹ Climate change tracker: <https://www.sos-uk.org/research/climate-change-tracker>

² Sustainability skills survey: <https://www.sos-uk.org/research/sustainability-skills-survey>

³ Sustainability skills survey: <https://www.sos-uk.org/research/sustainability-skills-survey>

reflective learning journals to log their personal and learning development over the course of the year. Participation will be from November through to April with an expected 5-7 hours per week time commitment.

Students will:

- Gain skills and understanding for innovating curriculum content and pedagogies for climate justice learning
- Become partners in progressing institutional change to embed climate justice with ESD pedagogies at your institution
- Work with peers and course representatives (or equivalent) to gain perspectives and input
- Work with academics and academic quality teams to contribute to course validation processes and course review cycles to ensure a sustainability lens is included at course and whole-institution levels
- Support academic and professional services staff to work together in developing whole-institution engagement with learning for climate justice
- Join multidisciplinary teams of students and academics working across their institution to ensure a joined-up approach, shared learning and creation of interdisciplinary opportunities for curriculum enhancement
- Participate as part of the programme's national network for progressing the D3 in education, enabling them to learn from experts and peers beyond their own institution

OUTPUTS: Students will work with staff to provide recommendations in a final report and presentation; they will work with academics to make both short term and long-term changes to their own academic disciplines.

Advised resource provisions: Institutions are advised to ensure a central member of staff is allocated capacity to support the coordination of ESD changemakers internally. In recognition of the work commitments expected of students, it is suggested students are reimbursed for their time either by bursary, an hourly wage (minimum of Real Living Wage), or through course credits. Where students are paid a minimum of the real living wage for their time it is advised they are employed through the institution or students' union.

Academics

ESD changemakers recognises the need for staff and educators in universities and colleges to have access to relevant support, training and knowledge exchange to progress this meaningfully for their specialisms and academic disciplines. Participating institutions will join a national network, seeking to address the D3, they will be connected with fellow academics, experts and students to promote shared learning.

Academics will:

- Develop an understanding of student demand and expectations for democratising, decarbonising and decolonising their institutions, and specifically their curricular
- Engage with students on relevant courses/programmes for curriculum design and enhancement
- Join other academics from across the programme's national network to share learning and identify opportunities for embedding the D3 in institutional mechanisms, curriculum content and pedagogies.
- Academics will be expected to provide regular check-ins and support for students

Institutions and students' unions

Institutions are encouraged to take part in Responsible Futures* framework and accreditation programme to identify, track and celebrate progress made through ESD changemakers. This co-creation approach to democratising, decolonising and decarbonising will actively support an institution and students' unions' progress towards achieving Responsible Futures accreditation.



[Responsible Futures](#) is a whole-institution supported change programme and accreditation mark to embed sustainability across all aspects of student learning. It is an externally-assessed accreditation mark (audited by students) to assist tertiary education institutions in helping students gain the skills and experience needed to thrive as global citizens. We actively support partnerships between students' unions

and institutions through a structured framework of criteria to encourage action on embedding sustainability, inclusive of climate justice, into formal and informal learning. This is the only framework of its kind that maps out the organisational innovation and enhancement required, spanning top down, middle out and bottom up level change, to achieve whole institution engagement with sustainability learning.

**Responsible Futures partnerships are offered a reduced rate to make use of this support package as a means of progressing their Responsible Futures accreditation. Students involved with this programme at participating Responsible Futures partnerships will be invited to join regular 6 weekly cohort catch-up calls with student leaders and staff from across the Responsible Futures network.*

Timeline (*for tier 2 membership only)

When?	What?	Who?
3 rd September 2021	Deadline to sign-up for 2021-22 academic year	Institutions with buy-in from students' unions. This may be led by SLT, Education enhancement team, sustainability team, students' union and/or academic schools/faculties.
September - 8 th October 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student recruitment 2. Staff recruitment <p><i>It is advised institutions aim to recruit students to represent their range of programme/course offerings, this may fit well with targeted recruitment through course representative systems. Institutions are encouraged to gain academic staff buy-in to partner with students from their academic areas.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students as co-creators, to apply to participation for academic year 2. Academic staff introduced to the programme <p><i>Tier 1 members to lead on this internally.</i></p> <p><i>Tier 2 members will have additional support with recruitment and provision of a staff introductory workshop from SOS-UK.</i></p>

Early November	Launch event: 1 day conference, with workshops and speakers	Organised by SOS-UK. Successful student applicants and participating academics/ staff and SU officers to participate (national network).
Mid-November	<p>Workshop 1: Shaping education for climate justice (the 3Ds, ESD, institution change processes)</p> <p>Workshop 2: Project planning (mapping, planning, collaborating, and M&E)</p> <p><i>Following workshop, students will work with their relevant academics to initiate project plans.</i></p>	<p>Organised by SOS-UK for participating students.</p> <p>Primarily for students, staff welcome to join.</p>
*Early December	Student check-ins	Group calls with students from each institution, facilitated by SOS-UK.
Mid-December	National network progress review: all day event focussing on progress made, key challenges and plans ahead.	Organised by SOS-UK. Successful student applicants and participating academics/ staff and SU officers to participate (national network).
*January	Student check-ins	Group calls with students from each institution, facilitated by SOS-UK.
*March	Student check-ins	Group calls with students from each institution, facilitated by SOS-UK.
April	Closing Conference: Celebration of progress made and lessons learned. Students and staff to co-present the learnings, outcomes and outputs of their co-creation approach to curricula transformation for sustainability.	Organised by SOS-UK. Successful student applicants and participating academics/ staff and SU officers to participate (national network).

Pricing

	Tier 1	Tier 2
Recruitment support	0.5	0.5
Pre-launch staff introduction (includes prep)		0.75
Guidance on how best to support your student 3Ds co-creators	0.5	0.5

Launch event (including prep)	2	2
Planning and preparatory workshops	1.5	1.5
National network progress review (event and prep)	2	2
Closing conference (including prep)	2	2
Student check-ins	0	3
Support for students with learning resources & reflective learning journal	0	2
Days	8.5	14.25
Travel (for launch & closing event)	£150	£150
TOTAL COST	£2,870	£4,710
Responsible Futures members, reduced cost	£2,070	£4,150

For more information and to sign up

To sign up to ESD changemakers for 2021-22 academic year, please complete the online form [here](#).

To discuss this offering further, please [contact Meg Baker](#), Interim director of education.

See our ESD changemakers web page [here](#).

Deadline for sign up academic year 2021-22 is 3rd September 2021