



# 2030 CURRICULUM DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## INSTIGATES A POSITIVE, SUSTAINABLE IMPACT AND TRANSFORMATION ON SOCIETY

### CURRICULUM 2030

The curriculum challenges current ways of working to make a positive impact and transformation on communities, integrating relevant ethical issues and a wider commitment to social justice.

The curriculum will enable USW graduates to be literate in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, possess intercultural and decolonial competence, explore and engage with Welsh culture(s) and make a positive, transformational impact on communities.

### ASSESSMENT 2030

Assessment practice to integrate sustainability and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) includes:

**Curriculum Alignment:** revise teaching content to address global and local challenges related to sustainability. Incorporate UNSDGs into course objectives, ensuring students engage with relevant topics through teaching learning and assessment.

**Holistic Assessment:** choose assessments that consider sustainability in a comprehensive manner. Assess work across multiple dimensions, including environmental, social, and economic impact.

**Active Participation:** encourage students to actively participate in sustainability initiatives. Assess their contributions to implementing UNSDGs within the University community and beyond.

**Interdisciplinary Thinking:** promote teaching methods that foster interdisciplinary thinking, integrated planning, and understanding complexity. These skills empower students to contribute effectively to sustainable development processes.

By ensuring sustainability is embedded into our curriculum and assessment practices we can nurture informed, engaged citizens who drive positive change in their communities.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



### THE USW CONTEXT

Undertaking sustainable development requires the development of new knowledge, skills and attitudes. USW is firmly committed to this as part of their USW 2030 strategy. By embedding sustainability across our curriculum, we are equipping the next generation of professionals with the necessary skills to help them face future global challenges across a range of sectors.

Our ambitions include a commitment to improving the future well-being of the communities we serve through individual and collective action. A key accelerator is our sustainable environment accelerator focused on creating a safer, more sustainable world. Our world-leading experts use their cutting-edge research to develop curriculum that help our students to address the challenges facing the world, now and in the future.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is “the process of acquiring the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to build local and global societies that are just, equitable and living within the environmental limits of our planet, both now and in the future.” (ESD Consulting, 2024)

A QAA funded project (see <https://www.anti-greenwash-education.com>) developed and tested a set of 4 principles to assess the quality of sustainability learning being integrated into courses as part of their “anti-greenwash education kit”:

**Joined up sustainability learning:** sustainability must be connecting social, environmental, and economic issues — mentioning global goals once or twice isn't enough to consider a course as sustainable.

**In a compulsory module:** it shouldn't be optional! We can't ensure everyone will make better choices if only a few students choose the modules with the best bits.

**From the first year to the final year:** really great courses will embed sustainability throughout first year to final year to ensure the learning is consolidated.

**Assessed is best!:** the best skills are developed when they're applied in practice and made relevant to real-world solutions through assessments.

### WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE SAY?

Universities “play a central role in educating future generations and directing societal policy, illustrating the need for their emergence as leaders in global sustainable development initiatives (Cortese, 2003). ... [however] implementation of sustainability in HEIs has been slower than needed” (Mokski et al, 2021, p97).

Current approaches to sustainability education focus on assessing and addressing the external world of ecosystems, wider socioeconomic structures, technology and governance dynamics. A major shortcoming of such approaches is the neglect of inner dimensions and capacities (which constrains education for sustainability as an end), and a limited capacity to facilitate reflection on the cognitive and socioemotional processes underpinning people's learning, everyday life choices and decision-taking (which constrains education for sustainability as a means). More integral approaches and pedagogies are urgently needed (Wamsler, 2020).

## EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY? — A REFLECTIVE CHECKLIST

The checklist shown below can support course and module leaders to self-evaluate their practice, to support Quality Assurance (Re)Validation, Continuous Monitoring and Assessment Dialogue processes in reflecting on how the CDP of Instigating a positive, sustainable impact and transformation on society is embedded in your curriculum, specifically regarding assessment.

SUSTAINABILITY	NOT EMBEDDED	PARTIALLY EMBEDDED	FULLY EMBEDDED
How does the course enable learners to explore and reflect on their own values and journey within the discipline and society?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What opportunities do learners have to engage purposefully with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and contribute to making a positive impact on society?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the curriculum been scaffolded to explicitly support students' development of personal; societal; environmental and economic well-being; thinking; and practices, as appropriate, in line with the ambitions of the UN Sustainable Development Goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are learner's own values are explored from the outset of the course and scaffolded throughout each level, with increasing challenge and critical thinking, both within the discipline and with other disciplines, industry, and the wider community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the curriculum demand consideration of ethics, social justice, equity and sustainability with opportunities to offer ideas for alternative futures that have a positive societal impact (locally, regionally, nationally and globally)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The curriculum and assessment has explicit, and scaffolded, opportunities across the course for learners to explore, engage with and contribute to Welsh culture(s) and practise intercultural and decolonial competence in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does assessment in the curriculum have frequent opportunities to present findings to stakeholders outside of the Institution?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Leal Filho, W., Pallant, E., Enete, A., Richter, B. and Brandli, L.L., 2018. *Planning and Implementing Sustainability in Higher Education Institutions: an Overview of the Difficulties and Potentials. International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology.*

Mokski, E., Leal Filho, W., Sehnem, S. and Andrade Guerra, J.B.S.O.D., 2023. *Education for Sustainable Development in Higher Education Institutions: an Approach for Effective Interdisciplinarity. International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education, 24(1), pp.96-117.*

ESD Consulting (2024) *Embedding Sustainable Development in the Curriculum.* Sustainability Exchange Available at: [https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/files/embedding\\_sustainability\\_in\\_the\\_curriculum\\_guide.pdf](https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/files/embedding_sustainability_in_the_curriculum_guide.pdf)

Tilbury, D., 2011. *Higher Education for Sustainability: a Global Overview of Commitment and Progress. Higher Education in the World, 4(1), pp.18-28.*

Wamsler, C., 2020. *Education for Sustainability: Fostering a More Conscious Society and Transformation Towards Sustainability. International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education, 21(1), pp.112-130.*

## WHERE CAN YOU GET SUPPORT?

CELT offers their Sustainability Toolkit to support colleagues in enhancing their pedagogic practice.



### SUSTAINABILITY TOOLKIT



One Page On

How to Guides

Development Workshop

Videos

Quick Guides

Case Studies

Detailed Handbook

Scholarship Project



Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching  
**Canolfan i Wella**  
**Dysgu ac Addysgu**



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*Mae ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is available in Welsh*