ESD Exchange 2026 Programme

Thursday 16th April 2026: Hugh Aston Building

From 9.15am: Arrivals, Refreshments available
10am: Opening Plenary
11am to 11.55am: Parallel Session 1
12pm to 12.55pm Parallel Session 2
1pm to 1.55pm LUNCH
2pm to 3.25pm: Parallel Session 3
3.30pm to 3.55pm: REFRESHMENT BREAK
4pm to 4.55pm: Parallel Session 4
From 6pm – optional social activities.

Friday 17th April 2026: Queens Building

From 8.30am: Arrivals, Refreshments available
9.15am to 10.10am: Parallel Session 5
10.15am to 11:10am: Parallel Session 6
11.15am to 11.35am REFRESHMENT BREAK
11.40am to 12.35pm: Parallel Session 7
12:40pm to 1pm: Closing Plenary

Day 1: Thursday 16th April. Hugh Aston Building, De Montfort University

Click the links for individual sessions to read the full abstract/summary and (co)authors of each contribution.

9.15am to 9.55am	Arrivals, Refreshments available	
10am to 10.55am	Opening Plenary	
11am to 11:55am: Parallel Session 1	1A: Whole-Institution Approaches	ESD Course Maturity: asking where we are and imagining where we could go *Lead Presenter(s): Tania Dias Fonseca, Kingston University* Meeting in the middle: Embedding ESD in Business School through Leadership and bottom-up Curriculum development *Lead Presenter(s): Shalini Bisani, De Montfort University* The Importance of Being – Implications for ESD Pedagogy *Lead Presenter(s): Orla Kelleher, University of Derby*
	1B: Green Skills Workshop	Green Skills in Universities - insights towards a national QAA collaborative project *Lead Presenter(s): Jonathan Louw and Karen Cripps, Oxford Brookes University*
	1C: Head, Heart, Hands ESD	CoDesignS ESD: Sustainability in Curriculum Design and Effective Monitoring/Evaluation *Lead Presenter(s): Maria Toro-Troconis, Association for Learning Design and ESD (ALDESD)* From Data to Development: A Module-Level Tool for Enhancing ESD *Lead Presenter(s): Theresa Nicholson, Manchester Metropolitan University*

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas

	1D: Lightning Talks – Provocative Ideas	Engaging Spaces - Truth & Hope *Lead Presenter(s): Hayley Lambert, University of Birmingham* Opportunity of Arts-Based Pedagogy to support ESD. *Lead Presenter(s): Roxane Butterworth, University for the Creative Arts* Teaching resources for futures thinking *Lead Presenter(s): Elaine Conway, Loughborough University* Decolonising Sustainability Competencies: is ESD relevant for all? *Lead Presenter(s): Andrew Reeves, De Montfort University* From Classroom to Campus Activism: Why Education on Factory Farming Belongs in Higher Education *Lead Presenter(s): Mahuua Sharma, Loughborough University* Decolonising Circularity: What a UK-India Packaging Study Teaches Us About Inclusive ESD *Lead Presenter(s): Saurav Roy, Loughborough University*
	1E: Practice-Based: Life Sciences	Star of the Day: Gamified Formative Assessment to Support Responsible and Sustainable Professional Learning in Dental Education *Lead Presenter(s): Rinal Sahputra, University of Manchester* The Sustainable Attainment Project: Bridging the Staff-Student Gap in Biomedical Science ESD Curriculum Mapping *Lead Presenter(s): Katie Coubrough, University of Strathclyde* Embedding Green Sustainability reflection into the Biosciences Integrated Masters programmes *Lead Presenter(s): Martin Pool, University of Manchester*
12pm to 12.55pm: Parallel Session 2	2A: AI and ESD	ESD v AI - have we lost the battle for attention? *Lead Presenter(s): Simon Kemp, University of Southampton* Harnessing AI to Advance Education for Sustainable Development *Lead Presenter(s): Romas Malevicius, King's College London*
	2B: Whole-Institution Approaches	Education for Sustainable Development at University of Westminster *Lead Presenter(s): Morgan Lirette, University of Westminster* Evaluating Education for Sustainable Development at Scale: Insights from a Cross-Disciplinary SDG Action-Planning Study *Lead Presenter(s): Jenny Davidson, Newcastle University* Building a Coherent, Scalable Framework for Embedding Sustainability Pathways Across the Curriculum *Lead Presenter(s): Steve Cayzer, University of Bath*
	2C: Green Skills Practices	Embedding green skills opportunities for business management students. *Lead Presenter(s): Jordan Peel, Manchester Metropolitan University* Addressing "extinction of experience" via place-based education for green skills *Lead Presenter(s): Moya Burns, University of Leicester* Challenging the green skills narrative: Considering quality rather than quantity and the learners' perspective *Lead Presenter(s): Zoe Robinson, Keele University and Lund University*

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	2D: Lightning Talks - Practices	BIM to YIM: The Evolution of Interdisciplinary Architecture *Lead Presenter(s): Daisy Kemp, University of York* Environmental sustainability education in Graphic Design: a pedagogical approach *Lead Presenter(s): Stefania Sansoni, Loughborough University, SDCA* Community-engaged learning in Graduate entry medicine. *Lead Presenter(s): Sarah Sharp, University of Manchester* Pedagogical approaches to the green skills gap: Content versus competencies *Lead Presenter(s): Sarah Strachan, Anglia Ruskin University* How can we teach finance students to look beyond the numbers? *Lead Presenter(s): Dr Neil Lancastle, De Montfort University*
	2E: Practice-Based: Business	An ESD and game-based teaching approach in Economics *Lead Presenter(s): Tuan Anh Luong, De Montfort University* Future Leaders' Sustainability Lens: Mirrors and Maps of Meaning *Lead Presenter(s): Masoud Keimasi, De Montfort University* Reimagining Finance Education for the Green Transition: A co-created ESG Trading Framework *Lead Presenter(s): Emmanuel Senyo Fianu, De Montfort University*
1pm to 1.55pm	LUNCH	
2pm to 3.25pm: Parallel Session 3	3A: Games-Based Workshops	The Sustainable Development Goals Summit *Lead Presenter(s): Simon Kemp, University of Southampton* Developing Sustainability Competencies through Modelling Implementable Green Transition Strategies *Lead Presenter(s): Richard Hodgkins, Loughborough University*
	3B: Diverse Practice-Based	Playing for the Planet: the place for joy in climate change education *Lead Presenter(s): Lynda Dunlop, University of York* From Modules to Mindsets: Embedding ESD in Fashion *Lead Presenter(s): Clare McTurk, Manchester Metropolitan University* From architecture to zoology: developing a curricular framing for ESD *Lead Presenter(s): Catherine Foley, University of Reading* How to hide the vegetables *Lead Presenter(s): Anje Conradie, Loughborough University* Embedding Sustainability in the HE Modern Language Curriculum: Awareness, Challenges, and Pedagogical Approaches *Lead Presenter(s): Hongfen Zhou, King's College London*
	3C: Staff-Student Partnering	Student-led audits as an effective tool to progress ESD in collaboration *Lead Presenter(s): Neva Mowl, University of Salford* Partnering with students for Education for Sustainable Development *Lead Presenter(s): Sara Agbenro, University of Exeter* Student Spotlight: Co-creating authentic approaches to Education for Sustainable Development *Lead Presenter(s): Victoria Grace-Bland, University of Reading*

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	3D: PRME Practice Workshop	PRME Chapter UK & Ireland ESD Resource Exchange *Lead Presenter(s): Laura Steele, Queen's University Belfast* Using systems and design thinking for solving SDG complex problems will be introduced in a workshop *Lead Presenter(s): Susanna Chui, De Montfort University*
	3E: ESD Mapping	A Comparative Study of Curriculum Reform and Student Sustainability Competence Development in Chinese and UK Universities *Lead Presenter(s): Zheng Wang, University of Leeds* A Comparative Analysis of SDG Integration Methodologies in Core Curricula Across UK Universities *Lead Presenter(s): Luke Farhall, University of Southampton* Mapping Climate and Sustainability Education Across the University of Cambridge *Lead Presenter(s): Katherin Garcia, University of Cambridge* Sustainable development goals (SDGs) implementation in higher education: the whole-university approach *Lead Presenter(s): Amal Abuzeinab, De Montfort University*
3.30pm to 3.55pm	BREAK	
4pm to 4.55pm: Parallel Session 4	4A: Student-Staff Co-Creation	Co-Creating Professional Skills Education through Playful Learning and Relational Leadership *Lead Presenter(s): Susan Pinner, Manchester Metropolitan University* Peer Reflection & Object Based Learning as a Catalyst for Social and Environmental Skills Development in Higher Education *Lead Presenter(s): Clare Jackson, University of Leeds* Creative participatory methods for co-created programme development *Lead Presenter(s): Caroline Edge, University of Salford*
	4B: Civically Engaged ESD	Community Engaged Learning with sustainability at its heart *Lead Presenter(s): Angela Purdham, University of York* UoM's University Living Lab *Lead Presenter(s): Aadya Gupta, University of Manchester* Engaged Learning for Sustainable Changemaking *Lead Presenter(s): Paul Warwick, University of Plymouth*
	4C: Whole-Institution Approaches	From funded project to embedded ESD practice *Lead Presenter(s): Alina Congreve, UCL/Vitae* Sustainability snapshots – insights into developing ESD on an institutional scale at the OU *Lead Presenter(s): Teresa Cox, Open University*
5pm	CLOSE	
From 6pm	Optional Evening Social	

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Day 2: Friday 17th April. Queens Building, De Montfort University

8:30am to 9.15am	Arrivals	
9:15am to 10:10am: Parallel Session 5	5A: Diverse Practice-Based	Sustainability first: Embedding sustainable considerations into everything we deliver *Lead Presenter(s): Jordan Turner, University of the Built Environment* Learning-to-teaching: engaging alumni role models in sustainability education *Lead Presenter(s): Jocelyn Cornish, King's College London* Rigour, Reflection, and Responsiveness: Cultivating Sustainable Scientists through Academic Skills Education *Lead Presenter(s): Amy MacLatchy, University of Westminster*
	5B: Climate Action Initiatives	Turning sustainability knowledge into action: lessons from a student climate innovation programme *Lead Presenter(s): Rosie Whittingham and Alice Jackson, University of Leicester* Growing food in higher education: educational possibilities and challenges *Lead Presenter(s): Perpetua Kirby, University of Sussex* Empowering Student-led Climate Action: Three Case Studies *Lead Presenter(s): Emma Wood and Jennifer Dranttel, Loughborough University*
	5C: Emotions and Activism	Engaging the educational elephant in the room: Emotions *Lead Presenter(s): Cathy d'Abreu, Oxford Brookes University/SEEd/Our Shared World* Teaching activism: Reflections on red lines, reactions and radicalism *Lead Presenter(s): Zoe Robinson, Keele University/Lund University*
10:15am to 11:10am: Parallel Session 6	6A: Diverse Practice-Based	Widening Participation Through Sustainable Science Education *Lead Presenter(s): Aaisha Patel, Liverpool John Moores University* Sustainable Skills by Design: Co-creating digital learning for sustainable healthcare education *Lead Presenter(s): Melanie Maddison, King's College London* Student-led videos to highlight UN-SDGs in undergraduate modules *Lead Presenter(s): Patrick Hamilton, University of Exeter*
	6B: Whole-Institution Approaches	From strategy to lasting curriculum change: Embedding EfS at King's College London *Lead Presenter(s): Louise Logan, King's College London* From Advocacy to Action: Developing Programme Action Plans for ESD Integration at the University of Strathclyde *Lead Presenter(s): Scott Strachan, University of Strathclyde* Culture, Technology and Materiality: Embedding the Design Council Skills for Planet Framework *Lead Presenter(s): Stuart Lawson, De Montfort University*

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	6C: Philosophical Critique	How Modernity Shapes Education? - Modernity through stories and identity *Lead Presenter(s): Shweta Salvi, De Montfort University*
11:15am to 11:30am	BREAK	
11:35am to 12:30pm: Parallel Session 7	7A: Sector-Wide Evaluation	How do we know if ESD is working? *Lead Presenter(s): Georgina Gough, UWE Bristol* Learning for Sustainability in Initial Teacher Education: a national Framework *Lead Presenter(s): Kirsten Leask, Learning for Sustainability Scotland*
	7B: Diverse Practice-Based	Incorporating education for sustainability into the built environment curriculum *Lead Presenter(s): Robert Read, King's College London* Designing and Delivering Impactful Sustainable Education in Marketing *Lead Presenter(s): Emily Bastable, University of Southampton* Clinical application of sustainability education by Advanced Practitioners: Longitudinal evaluation *Lead Presenter(s): Jocelyn Cornish, King's College London*
	7C: Student-Led Initiatives	Student co-creation of resources to support Aston Universities Powerskills initiative *Lead Presenter(s): Steve Russell, Aston University* A Creative Zine on The Evolution of a Student-Led Module *Lead Presenter(s): Adithi Sathiyan, King's College London* Student Led Sustainability Through Society Driven Governance at Manchester Met *Lead Presenter(s): Reece Buckley, Manchester Metropolitan University*
12:35pm to 1:00pm	Closing Plenary	

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Details of Contributions

Thursday 16th April, 11am to 11:55am: Parallel Session 1

Session 1A: Whole Institution Approaches

ESD Course Maturity: asking where we are and imagining where we could go
Tania Dias Fonseca, Kingston University

This presentation shares Kingston University's three-year journey in developing and refining a dynamic ESD maturity framework to understand how courses authentically embed Education for Sustainable Development and the UN SDGs. Designed to move beyond tick box mapping, the framework encourages course teams to reflect on their evolving practice, identify strengths and areas for growth, and foster genuine engagement with sustainability across teaching, assessment, and student learning. Across multiple implementation cycles, several challenges have emerged, such as data collection, staff confidence, disciplinary variation, and the need to capture richer insights without increasing staff workload, which have prompted iterative adaptations to the evaluative process. Student collaboration has been central in shaping both the framework and the ways evidence is generated. Rather than presenting definitive answers, this presentation will outline the framework's levels of maturity, share lessons learned, and invite questions, reflections, and dialogue on how institutions might adopt approaches to evaluating ESD integration.

Meeting in the middle: Embedding ESD in Business School through Leadership and bottom-up Curriculum development
Lead Presenter(s): Shalini Bisani, De Montfort University

Successful integration of sustainability and ESD across a variety of modules is predicated not merely on administrative directives, but on the authentic engagement and values-driven commitment of faculty. The Sustainability Mindset Principles advocate a values-based approach, engaging the head, hand and heart of learners (Rimanoczy and Llamazares, 2021). Our presentation charts the development of an 'embedded' Sustainability and ESD mapping tool and framework for the School of Leadership, Management and Marketing at De Montfort University. The framework centralises an ethics of care by explicitly mapping and foregrounding the values embedded in pedagogic approaches. Designed as a practical tool, it supports educators in thoughtfully and intentionally embedding sustainability within their teaching practice, aligning knowledge, skills, and values with sustainability challenges and SDGs.

The mapping exercise spanning over 50 modules across Leicester Castle Business School curriculum revealed that an overwhelming majority of faculty expressed deep personal and professional commitment to the SDGs. This data does not merely map the presence of the SDGs within the Business School curriculum but makes visible the underlying value-based propositions that drive authentic, ethically grounded teaching practice, demonstrating a deep alignment between faculty purpose, pedagogical intent, and the SDGs themselves.

Our approach to embedding sustainability integrates institutional strategy with the personal narratives and professional autonomy of educators. In doing so, we highlight the importance of leadership, creative curriculum interpretation, and a values-led approach to ESD that fosters meaningful and sustained curriculum transformation.

The Importance of Being – Implications for ESD Pedagogy
Orla Kelleher, University of Derby

Despite the availability of numerous well-established solutions to today's sustainability challenges, a persistent gap remains between knowing what to do and mobilising the mindsets, values, and motivations required to take transformative action. This presentation traces the historical evolution of humanity's relationship with the Earth, illustrating how centuries of cultural, scientific, and educational shifts have contributed to a modern-day disconnection from nature. In parallel, it examines how the purpose of education has transformed over time, moving toward a paradigm that privileges objectivity, rationality, and measurable outputs, while marginalising subjective experience, relational awareness, and the deeper dimensions of human 'being'. This talk argues for restoring balance across the three core dimensions of Thinking, Doing, and Being within Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). By revitalising the often-neglected 'being' dimension, encompassing values, long view, inner development, and relational consciousness, educators can foster a more holistic learning experience that aligns with natural human design intelligence. Such an approach supports not only cognitive

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understanding but also the inner capacities needed to sustain meaningful, long-term transformation. The presentation concludes with practical considerations for integrating the 'being' dimension into ESD pedagogy to better support transformative learning and societal change.

1B: Green Skills Workshop

Green Skills in Universities - insights towards a national QAA collaborative project
Lead Presenter(s): Jonathan Louw and Karen Cripps, Oxford Brookes University

How can Green Skills be conceptualised and best pursued as a priority in universities? This session shares insights identified by the ongoing Collaborative Enhancement Project on this theme led by Oxford Brookes University and SOS UK, and invites contributions from participants on what guidelines and principles could be of value to enable Green Skills acquisition to rise up the higher education agenda.

1C: Head, Heart, Hands ESD

CoDesignS ESD: Sustainability in Curriculum Design and Effective Monitoring/Evaluation
Lead Presenter(s): Maria Toro-Troconis, Association for Learning Design and ESD (ALDESD)
This session will provide an overview of the CoDesignS ESD Framework and Toolkit, highlighting the importance of systematically embedding key sustainability competencies within curriculum design.

Participants will gain a strong understanding of the CoDesignS ESD Framework, the functionality of the Toolkit Planner, and the recently developed CoDesignS ESD Institutional Dashboard. The dashboard supports the monitoring and evaluation of ESD integration across programmes, enabling institutions to visualise progress, identify gaps, and inform strategic curriculum development. The session will demonstrate how these tools can support both programme-level curriculum mapping and institution-wide reporting.

In addition, the presentation will explore the practical and strategic advantages of adopting the framework within professional practice and institutional contexts, including enhanced curriculum coherence, strengthened sustainability alignment, and improved quality assurance processes.

Reflections and case examples from academics who have successfully implemented the CoDesignS ESD Framework and Toolkit will be integrated throughout, offering practical insights, lessons learned, and inspiration for participants considering implementation within their own institutions.

From Data to Development: A Module-Level Tool for Enhancing ESD
Lead Presenter(s): Theresa Nicholson, Manchester Metropolitan University

Assessing the integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in curricula presents significant challenges, particularly where educator confidence and shared definitions vary. As part of an institution wide audit of progress in embedding ESD in programmes, we developed a local approach to capture the current state of play in our Department of Natural Sciences.

Using the three ingredients of the CoDesignS ESD Framework as a foundation, we created a concise MS Forms tool designed with a dual purpose; to gather module level data and to raise awareness of the essential elements of ESD. Module leads were asked targeted questions on the SDGs addressed, key sustainability competencies, learning domains (head heart hands), learning activity types, and pedagogical approaches. A simple scoring system enabled consistent identification of ESD enabled modules for audit purposes.

Data analysis allowed us to identify strengths and development priorities across programmes, while qualitative examples provided in text responses were used to disseminate effective teaching and learning practices. The audit form has since been re imagined as an Embedding ESD Review proforma and now underpins institution-level staff development workshops and curriculum enhancement. Finally, using Google's AI enabled Notebook LM, we transformed completed proformas into student facing Module Snapshots that highlight sustainability elements and their links to graduate attributes.

In this presentation we share our audit methodology, data analysis, review proforma, and examples of AI generated outputs. We consider their implications for embedding and evaluating ESD, enhancing educator confidence, and engaging students - offering a practical approach for colleagues seeking strategies to embed ESD within their own institutions.

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1D: Lightning Talks – Provocative Ideas

Engaging Spaces - Truth & Hope
Lead Presenter(s): Hayley Lambert, University of Birmingham

How can we create a better future if we can't imagine it?

Imagining a better future can be difficult when we're overwhelmed with fear or anxiety. Two recent projects at the University of Birmingham explored how we can inspire hope and meaningful action through co-curricula engagement.

Project 1: A series of interactive workshops to develop head, heart, and hands competencies, linking in with UNESCO's cross-cutting and specialized SDG competencies, the Inner Development Goals and the University of Birmingham Graduate Attributes. A calm and safe environment was created using ambient music and gentle ice-breaker exercises, with a range of topics explored through group discussion, mapping exercises, Thrutopians Phantoms & Glyphs cards, quizzes and games.

Project 2: 'The Imaginarium' – an interactive exhibition in the Main Library Foyer. This pop-up exhibition invited the University community to explore 'The World of What If?' with provocations such as:
1. What if we Reimagine our Future?
2. What if we were to take multi species flourishing seriously?
3. What if we all became time travellers?
4. What if we let ourselves feel the climate crisis?
5. What if we explore the climate crisis through BSL and visual forms of communication?
6. What if it were this easy to adapt your neighbourhood?
7. What if all voices were heard and valued equally?

These activities took inspiration from pedagogical models such as the hope wheel (Finnegan and D'Abreu, 2025) and the imagination sundial (Shorter, 2020). We reflect on how they supported students in practice to emotionally engage with sustainability and feel part of a wider collective of change-makers.

Opportunity of Arts-Based Pedagogy to support ESD
Lead Presenter(s): Roxane Butterworth, University for the Creative Arts

This session shares research evidence and examples explored using arts-based pedagogy to support ESD with students from the Business and Management for the Creative Industries foundation course at the University for the Creative Arts (UCA). It highlights the opportunities, that art-based pedagogy offers for student and staff engagement in ESD, and for supporting developing a sustainability mindset. It outlines the potential that art-based pedagogy offers to support ESD including authentic assessment, student self-directed learning, participation and collaboration, with reflective, creative problem solving and the opportunity for interdisciplinary learning. It promotes and looks to explore the use of arts-based pedagogy to support ESD in inter disciplinary settings and to support students building a sustainability mindset and foundation in green skills.

Teaching resources for futures thinking
Lead Presenter(s): Elaine Conway, Loughborough University

This session will introduce a range of practical activities which teaching staff can use with their class to promote futures thinking, to support critical thinking in their students, and the creation of a more positive future. It will focus on work generated by an international team of academics working through the PRME network and provide useful ideas to help students think about what they can do to improve future outcomes across a range of environmental and social activities.

Decolonising Sustainability Competencies: is ESD relevant for all?
Lead Presenter(s): Andrew Reeves, De Montfort University

Enhancing learner competencies and attributes to address sustainable development is seen as a key approach and objective of ESD. A range of universally-applicable national and international frameworks have been put forward towards this end, highlighting issues such as systems thinking, collaborating working skills, self-awareness and a long-term perspective. However, the developmental of influential frameworks affecting practice in higher education is largely drawn from research using insights and evidence from the Global North. This is despite a context of increasing higher education enrolment across the Global South, including high enrolment rates of international students in countries such as the UK. A decolonising lens can shed useful light on this issue, raising questions around the relevance and framing of sustainability competency frameworks

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for learners and when applied within diverse national contexts globally. This lens can also highlight potentially significant gaps in frameworks or contextual factors affecting their relevance. This talk highlights some key considerations and questions this perspective raises, which could be pursued through future research and practice. These include considering the underlying mindset of coloniality, and suggest stronger prioritisation on competencies for individual and collective action when powerful individuals and institutions may hinder a transition to a more sustainable future.

From Classroom to Campus Activism: Why Education on Factory Farming Belongs in Higher Education
Lead Presenter(s): Mahuua Sharma, Loughborough University

I am a student activist who has completed a 6 week and a 24-week comprehensive fellowship on the environmental, public health and social implications of our current factory-farmed food systems, guided by mentors, and interacting with field experts and researchers. I have also spoken in various secondary schools on issues such as factory farming. I've developed critical leadership skills, launching my own campus campaign and learning how to educate others on the vitality of factory farming issues. I am currently campaigning to embed factory farming within my university's curriculum reform and can speak to the vitality of embedding factory farming as a key aspect to obtaining environmental justice, promoting equity and addressing our most pressing climate issues. Food systems are major drivers of climate change, biodiversity loss, land use change, ocean degradation, and water depletion (UN FAO, IPCC AR6, Oxford Martin School). The IPCC identifies agricultural systems, and particularly livestock-related land use and emissions, as a key climate mitigation domain. I argue that understanding animal agriculture should be a fundamental green skill, including a value-based skill in 'Decolonising, equity, and inclusion'. Factory farming is severely underrepresented in the UK university curriculum within environmental, social, business and philosophy subjects, yet is supported by overwhelming high-quality research.

Decolonising Circularity: What a UK-India Packaging Study Teaches Us About Inclusive ESD
Lead Presenter(s): Saurav Roy, Loughborough University

This lightning talk explores the critical intersection of consumer behaviour, global trade, and packaging policies to challenge Western-centric paradigms within Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Drawing from an ongoing comparative study between the United Kingdom and India, this presentation highlights the profound, systemic divergence between Western "Technocratic Circularity" (Dove et al., 2025) and the Global South's "Social Circularity" (Pandey and Gautam, 2025).

Currently, standard sustainability frameworks, often taught as universal best practices, prioritise automated closed-loop recycling, mono-materials, and a "less is more" minimalist attitude (Norton et al., 2022). However, this talk will demonstrate how these concepts frequently fail to translate to differing socio-economic and cultural realities. For instance, while single-serve packaging in the UK is driven by individualism and convenience (Chu, Tang and Hetherington, 2024), the Indian "Sachet Economy" serves as a vital financial management tool for multi-generational, low-income households to access premium goods (Chittora and Awasthi, 2020). Furthermore, Western statutory frameworks, such as the UK's Plastic Packaging Tax, often create a "compliance trap" that penalises the multi-layer packaging required to withstand India's extreme climate and logistics network (Ali et al., 2024).

To effectively "decolonise" the ESD agenda and reflect the true priorities of global societies, higher education must move beyond teaching a one-size-fits-all environmentalism. This talk will propose that educators must integrate social science frameworks—such as Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (Chudzikowski et al., 2011) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2020)—into sustainability modules. By examining packaging as a complex "socio-technical system" (Niero, 2023), we can better equip future leaders and learners to design inclusive, globally aware, and culturally resilient environmental strategies.

1E: Practice-based: Life Sciences

Star of the Day: Gamified Formative Assessment to Support Responsible and Sustainable Professional Learning in Dental Education
Lead Presenter(s): Rinal Sahputra, University of Manchester

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) calls on higher education to cultivate reflective, responsible professionals capable of making informed decisions that support safe, equitable, and sustainable systems. Within healthcare education, this includes developing competencies such as critical thinking, evaluative judgement, accountability, and the ability to use feedback to guide practice. This presentation reports an action research project conducted within Year 2 Dentistry Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL) sessions at the University of Manchester. The project addressed a recurring challenge, in which formative sessions were completed rapidly, with limited engagement in feedback and an over-reliance on notes or digital

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resources, creating an illusion of understanding rather than demonstrating secure knowledge. To address this, a series of gamified formative assessment activities, collectively titled “Star of the Day,” were implemented and iteratively refined across five EBL cases. Activities included verbal quizzes, multiple-choice question (MCQ) assessments, crossword puzzles, and presentation-based evaluation aligned with Intended Learning Outcomes. These activities required students to retrieve, explain, and apply knowledge without reliance on notes, thereby making understanding visible. Across successive cycles, the intervention was adapted to address anxiety, unequal verbal participation, peer-scoring bias, and over-reliance on digital devices. The findings demonstrate how inclusive, low-stakes formative assessment can produce more reliable evidence of student understanding and reduce reliance on confidence-based participation. By making competence visible and supporting students to interpret and act on feedback, the intervention contributes to the development of responsible professional behaviours essential for safe and equitable healthcare practice. These competencies are directly relevant to sustainability challenges in healthcare, where accurate judgement, effective use of feedback, and reliable performance are critical in resource-constrained systems. The work aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), supporting the preparation of practitioners capable of contributing to sustainable healthcare systems.

The Sustainable Attainment Project: Bridging the Staff-Student Gap in Biomedical Science ESD Curriculum Mapping
Lead Presenter(s): Katie Coubrough, University of Strathclyde

Background and Aims
UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are operating under a rapidly evolving mandate to embed sustainability into the student experience. While Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) aims to equip students with competencies to navigate global challenges, systemic integration into existing curricula remains inconsistent. A significant barrier is the lack of subject-specific alignment, often resulting in a "top-down" approach that overlooks the student perspective. To address this, curriculum mapping has emerged as a critical tool for identifying ESD visibility and gaps. This study investigates a collaborative curriculum mapping initiative at the Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences (SIPBS), Biomedical Science (BMS) programmes, facilitated through a partnership with Students Organising for Sustainability UK (SOS-UK).

Methods
This project utilised a dual-mapping approach. Staff were provided with a mapping tool for their modules, incentivised by university sustainability initiatives. Student-led mapping was conducted by volunteers, in partnership with SOS-UK, to map their programme curriculum over two semesters.

Results and Discussion
The preliminary data reveals partial alignment between staff and student perceptions across all ESD framework components, including mapped SDGs, sustainability skills & competencies and pedagogical methods. However, results indicate that the full breadth of the mapping tool is not being utilised and possibly not fully understood. Both staff and students recognised only a limited subgroup of sustainability skills and teaching methods. This suggests a narrow understanding of the holistic nature of ESD among both staff and students. Currently, while curriculum revisions are the sole responsibility of teaching staff, effective integration is hindered if educators lack comprehensive, internal expertise in ESD delivery. Our initial findings highlight the dual challenge of enhancing institutional literacy while emphasising the importance of a "Students-as-Partners" approach. Collaborating with external experts, such as SOS-UK, is essential to move beyond surface-level alignment and successfully integrate the global sustainability agenda into the SIPBS, BMS curriculum.

Embedding Green Sustainability reflection into the Biosciences Integrated Masters programmes
Lead Presenter(s): Martin Pool, University of Manchester

Sustainability and sustainable development are key and ever developing themes underpinning biosciences. This is reflected in the updated 2023 QAA benchmarking for UG Biosciences degrees with ‘the need to equip students with an awareness of sustainable development and how that can be framed in their subject area’. We therefore wished to innovate how we train our students in sustainability within the curriculum of MSc Bioscience programmes at the University of Manchester. Programmes all feature a final year seven-month research project embedded in research groups encompassing laboratory, field and desk-based projects. Research projects have environmental impacts, both in terms of project outcomes and in the environmental impact of project design and its execution. We therefore introduced a new project ILO for students to reflect upon sustainability impacts of their projects and how these could be improved. We developed an interactive workshop session primarily for lab-based students, but also with resources for computational projects. Students produced a 200-word reflection handed in alongside their report, and marked by supervisors for engagement. This has the added benefit of

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exposing supervisors to faculty sustainability schemes currently being implemented. 95% of students completed the task, and analysis of the reflections indicated students appreciated that sustainable actions don't compromise high quality science nor health & safety, indicated correct messages came through from the workshop, and provided snapshots of students' perceptions and current best green practices within bioscience labs. We are rolling out the reflection to other bioscience MSc programmes and further refining the workshop session.

Thursday 16th April, 11am to 11:55am: Parallel Session 2

2A: AI and ESD

ESD v AI - have we lost the battle for attention?
Lead Presenter(s): Simon Kemp, University of Southampton

In the current and future strategic world of higher education (HE), sustainability and the growth of AI models and methods provide competing pressures. All HE institutions either have or are developing an AI strategy around both research and education, and many (but not all) are developing a sustainability strategy, with many of these integrating ESD principles into these strategies. Many consider these strategies mutually exclusive, and in the competitive HE marketplace, there is considerable international and national attention on positioning institutions as a leader in the AI space, for recruitment and research income purposes. This session will consider whether AI and ESD have to be distinctly separate activities, and whether ESD is compelled to merge with AI or face extinction within HE institution strategies and activities, given the vulnerability of the academic climate in the current era.

Harnessing AI to Advance Education for Sustainable Development
Lead Presenter(s): Romas Malevicius, King's College London

As generative AI tools become increasingly embedded within higher education, their contribution to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) remains underdeveloped. Although AI is frequently promoted as a mechanism for curriculum enhancement, far less attention has been given to how such tools mediate pedagogical practice and disciplinary engagement with sustainability. This presentation will examine the integration of the CoDesignS ESD AI Coach as a structured and collaborative intervention.
Using activity theory as an analytical lens, we will share findings from a mixed-methods study involving eighteen academics and practitioners across UK higher education, representing disciplines including engineering, medical sciences, sustainability and veterinary sciences. Participants engaged in a facilitated workshop introducing core sustainability concepts, the CoDesignS ESD Framework, and the ROCKS prompting method. Research data was generated through pre- and post-workshop surveys alongside focus group discussions.
Findings suggest that the AI Coach strengthened participants' confidence in embedding sustainability within curricula, and increased their confidence in using generative AI for curriculum development. Additionally, qualitative insights showed the importance of expert intervention. The tool appears most valuable as a catalyst for idea generation and structured reflection, particularly when guided by specialists in sustainability and curriculum design.
This presentation contributes to current debates on Green Skills and digital transformation by positioning AI in ESD as a pedagogically situated resource that requires collaborative framing and disciplinary expertise.

2B: Whole Institution Approaches

Education for Sustainable Development at University of Westminster
Lead Presenter(s): Morgan Lirette, University of Westminster

The University of Westminster is committed to '[helping] students and colleagues from different backgrounds […] contribute to a more sustainable, equitable, and healthier society'. Since the launch of the Being Westminster 2022-2029 organisational strategy, Westminster uses the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to guide and articulate its operations and contribution to its local and global communities.

Building on a decade of dedicated environmental sustainability, the Being Westminster strategy broadened the remit of the Sustainability Team to include sustainable education and research and knowledge exchange. An Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Action Plan was developed and approved in 2023-2024 to cover teaching and curriculum design, as well

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as ESD in Westminster governance, professional development, physical and digital environments, and extracurricular activities.

Two years in, Westminster has successfully embedded ESD into core curricula for all Foundation and Undergraduate courses across its encyclopaedic portfolio. Work is underway to assess how well this plays out in the classroom, and to match the ambition in Postgraduate courses. The remaining time of the strategy period will be dedicated to developing more innovative ways to provide education which is authentic, personalised, and transformative for our students; enriches the colleague experience; and strengthens our bonds with our communities.

Speaking to a more innovative approach - Vertically Integrated Projects (VIPs) for Sustainable Development launched as University-wide elective modules in January 2026. VIPs allow students from different disciplines and levels to tackle global challenges while gaining skills, experience, and academic credit in one. This competence-based approach represents a significant milestone in the transformation of education at Westminster.

The ESD leads at Westminster wish to share their journey thus far, what's to come, and the context in which they operate. In doing so, their hope is to enter a dialogue which collectively boosts higher education's invaluable impact for sustainable development.

Evaluating Education for Sustainable Development at Scale: Insights from a Cross-Disciplinary SDG Action-Planning Study
Lead Presenter(s): Jenny Davidson, Newcastle University

Despite growing institutional commitments to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), a persistent challenge remains of how to evidence meaningful student engagement and progression from awareness to action, particularly in disciplines where sustainability is not a core area of expertise. This study reports on the design and implementation of a digital SDG Action-Planning approach developed through a partnership between Newcastle University Business School and NETpositive Futures. The intervention integrates structured reflection, action and review within existing modules, enabling students to identify sustainability priorities aligned to their personal values and emerging professional identities.

Drawing on a data set of over 600 students across multiple disciplines, we will share both intended and un intended outcomes. Findings highlight the sustainability themes students identify as most salient, the actions undertaken, and the extent to which engagement supports the development of agency, confidence and purpose. The study also identifies unintended benefits, including enhanced career clarity, increased interest in purpose-driven employment pathways, student wellbeing and evidence of developing green skills relevant to employability.

Feedback from educators outside sustainability-related disciplines indicates that the approach provides a low-burden, flexible mechanism for embedding ESD without requiring specialist knowledge or major curriculum redesign. The findings suggest that learner-generated data offers a scalable method for monitoring ESD impact while supporting pedagogic enhancement and institutional reporting across diverse subject areas.

Building a Coherent, Scalable Framework for Embedding Sustainability Pathways Across the Curriculum
Lead Presenter(s): Steve Cayzer, University of Bath

Growing pressures from UK education policy, evolving labour market expectations, student demand, and the QAA's guidance on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) have made it imperative for universities to provide structured and impactful sustainability learning opportunities for all students. Yet, in many institutions, sustainability practice remains fragmented: excellent initiatives exist, but they operate in silos, disconnected from each other and from core curricula. This presentation presents a coherent, scalable, university-wide framework designed to integrate these disparate activities, without requiring substantial new resource investment or generating additional burden for staff and students.

The framework builds on existing course designs, where sustainability is often embedded "on paper" but not consistently enacted in practice, and provides students with an accredited pathway comprising three progressive levels: Sustainability Citizen, Sustainability Advocate, and Sustainability Leader.

The Citizen level is embedded across all programmes and focuses on foundational knowledge of sustainability, the SDGs, and discipline-specific relevance, supported by competencies in systems thinking, values-led reasoning, and problem-solving.

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The Advocate level leverages existing careers infrastructure, enabling students to gain recognition for participating in sustainability activities, including external partnerships such as Carbon Literacy Training, Climate Fresk, Vertically Integrated Projects, and One Young World.

The Leader level is a selective, centrally run programme through which students apply theories of change, develop leadership skills, and deliver measurable impact via campaigns, research, or stakeholder-engaged initiatives.

A key contribution of this work is the demonstration that meaningful ESD integration does not require wholesale redesign of curricula, assessment, or intended learning outcomes. Instead, educators can embed sustainability through explicit articulation of sustainability implications, discipline-relevant case studies, and signposting to co-curricular opportunities. We provide a structured summary of learning outcomes across the three levels, covering knowledge, competencies, and behaviours, to support reproducibility and adaptation by other institutions.

By offering a unified, resource sensitive structure that connects curriculum, co-curriculum, and external partners, this framework aims to develop graduates equipped with the sustainability mindsets and capabilities demanded by employers and society. The presentation will share early insights from design and stakeholder consultation, highlight challenges and enablers, and invite dialogue on how such frameworks can contribute to sector wide systemic change in ESD.

2C: Green Skills Practices

Embedding green skills opportunities for business management students.
Lead Presenter(s): Jordan Peel, Manchester Metropolitan University

In line with Manchester Metropolitan University's strategic commitment to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and a future focused curriculum, a gap was identified in sustainability competencies and green skills within the Faculty of Business and Law. This reflects wider national and global concerns, with Deloitte (2021) reporting that over 76% of organisations expect green skills to be essential for all jobs by 2050, and persistent skills shortages continuing to inhibit organisational transformation (WEF, 2025). Existing studies highlight barriers in higher education such as the cost of sustainability certifications, work–life balance pressures, and limited access to practical learning opportunities, yet emphasise the value of experiential, project based, and industry aligned learning approaches (Costa et al., 2025; Nguyen et al., 2025; UK Parliament, 2025, Nicholson et al., 2024, Leal et al., 2016). Although, research examining the integration of green skills into business school curricula is increasing, it remains sparse, particularly regarding qualitative insights into student experiences.

This presentation covers a case-based investigation into a newly developed level 6 (final year) Sustainability Management Project module within Business Management programme at Manchester Metropolitan University. Designed in collaboration with colleagues across the institution, the module provides students with authentic experiential learning through live sustainability projects gaining accreditation by the Institute for Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP). Qualitative, interpretive data were collected from a range of stakeholders, with reflective statements from the first cohort (n=60) forming the primary dataset. The findings offer insight into the curriculum design, learning experiences, and competencies required to prepare business school graduates for employment in sustainability focused roles, as well as broader roles where green skills are increasingly important. More broadly, the case illustrates how embedding sustainability learning that aligns with industry needs, policy priorities, societal goals, and students' personal ambitions can strengthen graduate outcomes, support the development of professional identity, and contribute positively to organisations and the wider civic community.

Full citations available on request

Addressing "extinction of experience" via place-based education for green skills
Lead Presenter(s): Moya Burns, University of Leicester

Field-based learning in higher education is in marked decline, constrained by financial pressures, administrative burdens, and increasing time limitations for both staff and students. This contraction risks intensifying the "extinction of experience", the progressive loss of direct human engagement with nature, that is already evident among students and the wider public. Residential field courses have historically been the key mechanism through which students have been given the opportunity to engage with nature and develop green skills. However, this approach introduces structural barriers to participation for many student groups, reinforcing inequities that contribute to the environmental sector remaining one of the least diverse

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areas of employment. Professional bodies across the green economy have identified these trends as drivers of a widening green skills gap, and a looming capacity shortfall for future environmental and sustainability workforces.

This presentation shares how embedding place based learning and authentic assessment within the curriculum can mitigate these challenges. We describe how adopting a living laboratory model, linking students with local environmental practitioners to conduct purpose-driven campus-based research, enables the development of green skills within existing teaching structures. We also demonstrate how authentic assessments, such as UKHab surveys of local environments, provide students with sector relevant competencies without reliance on residential fieldwork. Finally, we show how partnering with students as curriculum co designers can enhance skills acquisition and reduce barriers to engagement. We conclude by evaluating the emerging impacts of this approach on students' green skills development and by considering its wider applicability for addressing the extinction of experience across the higher education sector.

Challenging the green skills narrative: Considering quality rather than quantity and the learners' perspective
Lead Presenter(s): Zoe Robinson, Keele University and Lund University

Developing an appropriately skilled workforce to deliver the net zero transition, and in particular transitions in domestic heating and transport is a key challenge to the UK meeting net zero targets. Green skills narratives suggest that the market for uptake of some domestic technologies has been slow to develop in part due to a limited workforce, while the drivers for upskilling the workforce can be limited by the perception of a lack of market. Missing from these debates on providing a skilled workforce for the green transition are considerations of the quality and breadth of appropriate skills of the workforce rather than just quantity, and the learners' perspectives themselves.

This contribution will explore the findings of a project which has identified the importance of the 'quality' of green skills provision and the perceptions of learners on developing green skills. The contribution draws on findings from interviews with education providers delivering green skills relating to domestic heating and transport transitions in further education settings and through independent providers. Interviews have identified that some learners have been reluctant to embrace learning focused on new sustainable technologies (such as electric vehicles and heat pumps) because of perceptions that these technologies are not as interesting to work on or do not align with their personal identities. The interviews also highlighted challenges around short course mechanisms of green skills provision, and the need for broader skills development, beyond what the more technical green skills narratives focus on. Interviews have highlighted that addressing the challenges of green skills requires a more nuanced understanding of the challenges, including an understanding of learner perspectives, which has catalysed a new phase of work looking to explore the perspectives of learners themselves.

2D: Lightning Talks - practices

BIM to YIM: The Evolution of Interdisciplinary Architecture
Lead Presenter(s): Daisy Kemp, University of York

Interdisciplinary working has been at the core of setting up 'Environmental Sustainability at York', or 'ESAY': a non-departmental university-based team with the goal of bringing together the environmental sustainability community at York under one umbrella. Under this structure, staff from different subjects come together to deliver key projects such as the suite of sustainability-focused York Interdisciplinary Modules (YIMS). This presents the prospect of innovative cross-departmental collaborations, but also the challenge of breaking boundaries, problem solving, and navigating systems which were not designed for these new models, as well as a melding of teams from different working cultures and practices. This lightning talk will offer a snapshot of the benefits and challenges around launching sustainability and education initiatives which do not fit within traditional academic structures, building community and stakeholder relationships, and the importance of professional support staff in traversing this landscape.

Environmental sustainability education in Graphic Design: a pedagogical approach
Lead Presenter(s): Stefania Sansoni, Loughborough University, SDCA

Graphic designers have an impactful communication role to shape the opinion and guide behaviours of users, including impact of wide audiences. It is our opinion that educating graphic design (GD) students in the power of their communication role for promoting environmental sustainability (ES) could make a huge difference in impacting users to understand ES and taking conscious sustainable actions. This presentation is shaped around the concept that higher education has a crucial role to play in shaping the understanding of GD students in the field of ES.

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

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Our perspective is that GD students should build awareness and have structured education on ES as part of their undergraduate education, both to shape a design thinking approach including sustainable design strategies, as well as for impacting their ES understanding as human beings. This presentation will discuss the importance of a higher education pedagogical approach, including case studies from our teaching focusing on promoting a critical perspective, and conducting experiential learning on ES and promoting individual case-study learning based on real-life situations, aligned with each students' personal interest, to promote their motivation.

This presentation will focus on a practice-based pedagogical approach aiming to educate future graphic designers to develop effective sustainable communication strategies.

Community-engaged learning in Graduate entry medicine
Lead Presenter(s): Sarah Sharp, University of Manchester

Background:
Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) calls for equipping student doctors to recognise social inequities and the need for healthcare practitioners to contribute to sustainable communities. Early community placements can lay foundations for professional identity formation - increasing awareness of the impact of social determinants on outcomes and the role of community-based careers in addressing areas of high need.
This abstract describes a two-week community block for Year 1 Graduate Entry Medicine (GEM) students at the University of Manchester (UoM), designed to integrate experiential and community-engaged learning in areas of high health need across Greater Manchester.

Methods:
GEM students undertook a mandatory 'Health in Greater Manchester' community block comprising various placements structured around authentic workplace participation and civic partnership with NHS, voluntary and educational organisations. Community-engaged learning included students teaching a PSHE 'Vaping Awareness' lesson in local primary schools (all 55 students) and collaboration with the ASKMyDOC charity to run a Student-led blood pressure clinic for underserved global majority communities (16 students). Supervisor debrief and structured reflection supported professional identity formation.

Results:
The block provided early immersion in multidisciplinary, community-based settings, enabling students to experience the social determinants of health in practice. Participation in teaching and screening initiatives, embedded students as active contributors to community wellbeing rather than passive observers, as in traditional placements. Student feedback indicates enhanced understanding of population health, increased cultural awareness and strengthened consultation and teamwork skills.

Conclusion:
By placing students in communities experiencing health inequity, the programme supports the development of socially responsible graduates motivated to practice in areas of high need. Learning from the GEM block can shape the development of community engaged learning for the UoM undergraduate medical programme.

Pedagogical approaches to the green skills gap: Content versus competencies
Lead Presenter(s): Sarah Strachan, Anglia Ruskin University

As the UK economy targets net zero by 2050, demand for green skills in the workforce will grow, and there will also be a risk of skills gaps and skills shortages. The role of green skills in supporting a just transition to a low carbon economy and society or 'going green' is well documented in the literature, but there are relatively few articles which address the pedagogical approaches required to provide these skills. Recognising the skills most in demand by employers are likely to be 'soft' transferable skills rather than 'hard' technical skills, there needs to be a transition from knowledge-based skills towards values- and attitudes-based skills in higher education. This paper provides a case study of pedagogical approaches at Anglia Ruskin University, including integration of education for sustainability via the active inclusive curriculum and graduate capitals, and a standalone co-curricula module focused on green skills and careers for change. These approaches are underpinned by a competency-based framework which addresses the ways in which students think, the ways in which they practice, and students' ways of being.

How can we teach finance students to look beyond the numbers?
Lead Presenter(s): Dr Neil Lancastle, De Montfort University

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

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In this capstone course, we find that finance students initially navigate uncertainty by relying on financial models to predict future stock prices. We embed education for sustainable development through action-oriented learning - an investment management simulation - using ex-post analyses to critique these financial models. As the course progresses, students' reflective diaries show an increased willingness to include non-financial and ESG factors (environment, social and governance) in their investment decision-making. Our findings suggest that action-oriented learning and reflective practices can balance the empirical, theoretical, and critical thinking skills needed for careers in sustainable investment.

2E: Practice-based: Business

An ESD and game-based teaching approach in Economics
Lead Presenter(s): Tuan Anh Luong, De Montfort University

In recent years, the integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into economics curricula has become increasingly necessary to prepare students for the complexities of modern economic and environmental systems. Traditional economics education often prioritises models of efficiency, optimisation, and rational choice, but these frameworks alone are insufficient for addressing the sustainability challenges of the 21st century (Sterling, 2011). The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underscores the need for transformative education that equips learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and behaviours necessary for a sustainable future (UN, 2015; UNESCO, 2017).

This case study focuses on BECS 3001: Advanced Microeconomics and Applications, a Level 6 optional module at De Montfort University. Historically, the module focused on principal-agent theory, moral hazard, information asymmetry, and contract design. While these remain foundational concepts, the pedagogical strategy has evolved. Recognising that future economists must negotiate complex societal challenges, ranging from climate transitions to equitable policy trade-offs, we redesigned the module to explicitly embed ESD principles.

This decision aligns with both institutional goals and wider educational imperatives. De Montfort University is committed to the UN SDGs through its participation in the United Nations Academic Impact initiative and internal strategic frameworks. From a teaching perspective, embedding ESD offered an opportunity to promote student agency, link theory to real-world dilemmas, and cultivate competencies vital for sustainable decision-making in policy and business contexts.
In this case study, we document the rationale, design, implementation, and outcomes of this redesign. In doing so, we aim to contribute to the growing literature on how economics education can be reimagined for sustainability while remaining rigorous, analytical, and intellectually challenging.

Full citations available on request

Future Leaders' Sustainability Lens: Mirrors and Maps of Meaning
Lead Presenter(s): Masoud Keimasi, De Montfort University

This study examines how future business leaders conceptualise sustainability through visual metaphors. Drawing on the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), business students were invited to generate images using generative AI platforms and to curate additional visuals through web searches to represent their understanding of sustainability. Through in-depth interviews and structured metaphor elicitation procedures, the study reveals the deep metaphors, underlying values and latent tensions shaping participants' mental models.

Moving beyond interpretive analysis, the research benchmarks these elicited mental models against established sustainability frameworks, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and corporate sustainability paradigms such as the triple bottom line. By systematically comparing students' metaphor-driven representations with recognised theoretical standards, the study identifies cognitive blind spots and areas of misalignment. These insights highlight where business education may require curricular strengthening to foster responsible, systems-oriented leadership. In doing so, the research contributes at three distinct levels.

Phase 1 centres on image generation and the ZMET process, combining visual exploration with in-depth interviews to surface the metaphors that structure students' sustainability thinking. This descriptive phase seeks to uncover the underlying mental models guiding their perceptions.

Phase 2 adopts a comparative lens, analysing the extent to which these metaphor-based insights converge with or diverge from recognised sustainability frameworks. This analytical stage bridges subjective meaning-making with established theory.

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Phase 3 turns to pedagogical refinement. Here, identified gaps are translated into targeted content areas for future lectures, ensuring closer alignment between the curriculum, global sustainability expectations and theoretical benchmarks.

Reimagining Finance Education for the Green Transition: A co-created ESG Trading Framework
Lead Presenter(s): Emmanuel Senyo Fianu, De Montfort University

As governments and regulators are finding ways to better contribute to the green transition in order to mitigate climate change, higher education must ensure that graduates possess the analytical competence to allocate capital sustainably. However, sustainability appears conceptually taught in quantitatively intensive disciplines such as (quantitative) finance. Traditional optimisation frameworks dominate curricula, while environmental metrics are treated as supplementary rather than embedded variables.

This contribution presents a strategic trading-based co-creation modelling framework for integrating Green Skills directly into quantitative finance education through an Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) Trading Challenge using professional data platforms such as Bloomberg and London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG) Workspace, embedded within postgraduate applied asset management teaching. Instead of positioning sustainability as ethical discourse, the model integrates ESG constraints and other related features directly into portfolio construction, risk modelling and performance evaluation. To this extent, students construct portfolios where expected return and risk remain central analytical pillars. In this framework, portfolio performance is assessed using risk-adjusted metrics, ESG scores, and benchmark-relative evaluation, thereby positioning sustainability as a structural decision variable rather than an ethical overlay. This approach postulates Green Skills as measurable competencies that reflect: ESG data literacy, sustainability-adjusted benchmarking, and responsible investment reasoning. As a result, designing assessment embeds sustainability within technical evaluation criteria, ensuring constructive alignment between employability, disciplinary rigour and institutional Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) strategy.

Against this backdrop, the modelling framework advances pedagogical innovation by embedding sustainability within assessment design, preserving quantitative rigour while developing measurable competencies in ESG data literacy, impact benchmarking, and responsible capital allocation. A structured monitoring framework evaluates financial performance, environmental metrics, analytical robustness, and reflective judgement. From a policy perspective, this approach aligns finance education with green transition priorities, sustainable finance capabilities, and workforce preparation for climate-related risk governance and responsible investment decision-making. The ESG Trading Challenge provides a reproducible, evidence-based model for embedding measurable Green Skills within technical disciplines, offering direct relevance for institutional sustainability strategies and sector-wide ESD implementation.

Thursday 16th April, 2pm to 3:25pm: Parallel Session 3

3A: Games-based workshops

The Sustainable Development Goals Summit
Lead Presenter(s): Simon Kemp, University of Southampton

The Sustainable Development Goals Summit has been played by university students, sixth-form students, GCSE students, academics, sustainability experts, community event participants (including the pub) and senior management over 120 times since 2012 across the world. The SDG summit is focused on gamification of ESD, in an energetic, thought-provoking and fun format as a way of engaging a range of audiences with sustainability principles away from traditional lectures. This workshop will involve a lightning version of the SDG summit game (it usually takes 90-120 mins) followed by a brief discussion around whether the development of the game into an app to be shared across the HE sector should be pursued.

Developing Sustainability Competencies through Modelling Implementable Green Transition Strategies
Lead Presenter(s): Richard Hodgkins, Loughborough University

What does it mean to develop "green skills" in practice, and how do we know when students have acquired them? This workshop draws on experience from a Master's-level module in energy systems modelling at Loughborough University to explore these questions in a grounded, practitioner-oriented way. Energy and resource modelling for the green transition — using open-source tools developed through the UK Aid-funded Climate Compatible Growth programme — offers a rich context for developing sustainability competencies: systems thinking, working with uncertainty, translating analysis into implementable policy narratives, and understanding trade-offs across climate, land, energy and water systems, addressing the UNESCO "Strategic and Integrated Problem-Solving" and "Systems Thinking and Anticipatory" ESD Competencies. This

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

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session brings together voices from within and beyond the module, including perspectives on what students experience, and how skills developed through technical sustainability education connect to careers and further study. Together, we examine which competencies students feel they develop, how these map onto green skills frameworks, and what this suggests about how universities can better align technical sustainability education with purpose-driven careers. Participants will leave with practical insights and prompts for reflection on green skills development in their own institutional contexts.

Session structure:
Introduction - 10 minutes
Interactive Game - 15 minutes
Chaired Q&A - 15 minutes

3B: Diverse Practice-based

Playing for the Planet: the place for joy in climate change education
Lead Presenter(s): Lynda Dunlop, University of York

Article 12 of the Paris Agreement, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, commits to empowering all members of society to engage in climate action, including through education. One under-explored space for climate education is through games (Abraham and Jayemanne 2017). Games are a means by which players can develop an understanding of climate change through active engagement, knowledge construction (Ouariachi et al. 2019), emotional engagement, simulated decision-making and envisioning consequences over time (Wu and Lee 2015). Games allow players to explore taking different stances, being a different person, and acting in ways they would not in the real world. This presentation will focus on Play for the Planet, an interdisciplinary and international network which brings together game designers, researchers, and educators who are passionate about addressing planetary crises through the power of play. Our mission is to explore a diverse range of playful materials— card and board games, digital games, interactive narratives, simulations, and more—as tools for modelling, stimulating discussion, fostering learning, and building connections. This presentation will share different ways of understanding and enacting climate change through games and will highlight some of the outcomes of the network, including new knowledge, new community, new educational opportunities and new games, as well as more traditional research outputs such as research articles. It will focus on the importance of centring pleasure and community in climate change education, in order to enhance learning, aid decision-making, and deepen empathy towards people, places, and our planet. This presentation is likely to be of interest to participants as a creative and positive form of climate change education that they can get involved with.

Full citations available on request

From Modules to Mindsets: Embedding ESD in Fashion
Lead Presenter(s): Clare McTurk, Manchester Metropolitan University

The UK fashion and textile industry contributes over £62 billion to the economy and supports more than 1.3 million jobs, positioning it as economically significant and environmentally impactful. As climate pressures intensify and students increasingly demand purpose-driven education, higher education must move beyond isolated sustainability modules toward systemic curriculum transformation.

This presentation shares a department-wide framework developed at Manchester Fashion Institute to embed Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across a multi-module undergraduate fashion curriculum. The initiative responds to sectoral urgency through a structured model of curriculum transformation. The process has enabled closer alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the UNESCO (2017) key competencies for sustainability, establishing a coherent framework through which transformative pedagogies are designed, mapped and evaluated. By scaffolding competencies across levels of study, the framework makes explicit how active and reflective learning is cultivated, embedding sustainability not only in subject knowledge but in students' capacity for ethical judgement, agency and systemic change.

The framework aligns Bloom's Taxonomy with ESD competencies to support progression: students move from knowledge of sustainable materials and production systems toward higher-order capacities in critical analysis, ethical evaluation and regenerative innovation. Rather than positioning sustainability as content alone, the approach reframes it as a mindset embedded through assessment design, experiential learning and cross-module alignment.

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The presentation will outline the curriculum mapping methodology used to identify sustainability gaps; the alignment of learning outcomes, assessment strategies and ESD competencies; leadership processes supporting department-wide adoption; and early indicators of impact, including approaches to monitoring longitudinal ESD development.

From architecture to zoology: developing a curricular framing for ESD
Lead Presenter(s): Catherine Foley, University of Reading

As the 'home of the climate stripes', the University of Reading has well-established strengths in climate science, and a long-standing commitment to ensuring that environmental sustainability is established throughout the student experience. However, with a diverse range of subject disciplines and staff, the challenge has remained ensuring that all students, no matter their discipline, exit their degree with a genuine sense of how their subject, and future career, fit into this environmental context. With an eye looking beyond the SDGs, we have been working to develop a curricular framing to allow every programme director and module convenor to grasp the potential to meaningfully integrate sustainability into their discipline, without compromising the integrity of the subject. This framing draws upon consultation with our university-wide student panel and the development of a Theory of Change based on wide-ranging staff consultation. The presentation will invite feedback on the developing framing, and consider pitfalls and staff support needs.

How to hide the vegetables
Lead Presenter(s): Anje Conradie, Loughborough University

Universities continue to face a persistent challenge: students often disengage from standalone study skills modules, perceiving them as irrelevant, generic, or disconnected from their disciplinary learning. This frequently results in low attendance, superficial engagement, and limited long term impact, echoing critiques such as Wingate's (2006) call to move beyond bolt-on skills instruction. This presentation outlines the Foundation Year's innovative response, "hiding the vegetables", by embedding academic skills seamlessly within an engaging, meaningful, and socially relevant curriculum framed around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Rather than teaching skills as an isolated add on, the Sustainability in Practice module integrates academic writing, digital literacy, information searching, ethics, data handling, groupwork, and programming directly into authentic tasks connected to global sustainability challenges. Students encounter each skill at the precise moment they need it, supported by specialist staff and accessible, structured resources on Learn. The two-semester design includes interdisciplinary group projects, hands on data analysis, Python-based app development, and a culminating assessed poster presentation judged by the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Climate Change and Net Zero, with the potential for winning ideas to be implemented at institutional level.

This embedded approach not only enhances engagement and retention of skills but also develops learners' confidence, critical awareness, and capacity to contribute to real-world problems, aligning with UNESCO's (2019) vision of Education for Sustainable Development as holistic, transformative, and integral to quality education. By integrating skills within meaningful, sustainability focused learning, we "hide the vegetables" while empowering students with competencies that genuinely matter for their academic and professional futures.

Embedding Sustainability in the HE Modern Language Curriculum: Awareness, Challenges, and Pedagogical Approaches
Lead Presenter(s): Hongfen Zhou, King's College London

This paper investigates how sustainability is conceptualised and embedded within Modern Language programmes in UK Higher Education, addressing a notable gap in scholarship that has largely focused on English language teaching. Drawing on Stephen Sterling's (2004) 'strong' model of Education for Sustainability, which foregrounds systemic thinking and learner agency, the study reconceptualises language education as a transformative, intercultural practice rather than solely a process of skills acquisition.

The research explores three questions: (1) how language educators interpret the meaning and relevance of sustainability within diverse linguistic and cultural contexts; (2) which pedagogical strategies and resources are employed to integrate sustainability themes; and (3) which institutional conditions enable or constrain curriculum integration. The study is based on a thematic analysis of 14 semi-structured interviews conducted with language educators and programme leaders at a UK higher education institution.

Findings indicate that sustainability is understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing environmental, cultural, social, and ethical dimensions. Participants identified clear pedagogical benefits, including enhanced linguistic proficiency, critical engagement, and intercultural awareness. Effective integration was associated with student-centred, communicative approaches such as debates and project-based learning. However, implementation remains largely dependent on individual

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas

initiative rather than systematic curriculum design. Key barriers include limited materials, time constraints, perceived proficiency limitations, and uncertainty regarding professional identity. The paper concludes by outlining structural and pedagogical conditions necessary to support sustainable curriculum transformation in modern language education.

3C: Staff-Student Partnering

Student-led audits as an effective tool to progress ESD in collaboration
Lead Presenter(s): Neva Mowl, University of Salford

The University of Salford joined the Responsible Futures programme in September 2023, and following an audit in November 2025 gained accreditation.

Led by Students Organising for Sustainability UK (SOS UK), Responsible Futures Brings together staff and students collaboratively to develop graduates who are well-rounded and active in creating a more sustainable world. Through a framework assessed via a student-led audit, and determining Responsible Futures accreditation, the programme embeds holistic sustainability across student learning.

In this presentation we will highlight how our preparation for and participation in the programme's student-led audit has greatly supported the University's progress with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and the development of a strategic approach to ESD.

During the audit, students assessed our progress in:
• Enhancing partnership working with the Students' Union on sustainability.
• Ensuring student voice is at the heart of our ESD developments.
• Gaining leadership support for ESD and wider sustainability.
• Embedding ESD in relevant University strategies and processes.
• Improving monitoring, measuring and evaluating ESD activities.
• Collaborating on sustainability with colleagues and students from across the University and beyond.

We also worked with SOS UK to carry out student-led sustainability curriculum mapping for our Business School. This has been a useful tool for the School and we hope to do the same for the rest of the University.

We still have a lot of work to do to ensure that quality and meaningful ESD is embedded into all of our programmes, and that the impacts and outcomes are consistently evidenced. However, Responsible Futures has been, and will continue to be, instrumental in shaping and strengthening our approach.

Partnering with students for Education for Sustainable Development
Lead Presenter(s): Sara Agbenro, University of Exeter

This workshop will introduce Exeter University's sustainability interns, outlining how the roles were developed, how they have evolved over time, and the impact this has had on sustainability education at the University. This introduction will highlight paid internships as a core mechanism for partnership-working with students and for providing structured opportunities for students to gain meaningful experience in sustainability roles, while contributing to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) across the institution. An in-session exercise will help attendees explore existing and potential opportunities to develop or expand similar roles within their institutions.

Student Spotlight: Co-creating authentic approaches to Education for Sustainable Development
Lead Presenter(s): Victoria Grace-Bland, University of Reading

At the University of Reading, we have taken a partnership approach to further our commitment to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), working collaboratively with students to explore what ESD means within their respective disciplines, and how environment and sustainability issues may influence their professional and personal contexts.

The UoR Student Panel represents a diverse cross-section of the university community, covering all subject-areas and levels of study. The panel intentionally amplifies voices that are often underrepresented in institutional decision-making, positioning students as co-creators and drivers of institutional change.

Through a series of interactive workshops and dialogue-based enquiry, we asked students to define what it means to be 'sustainability-minded', identify where ESD could be embedded into teaching and learning practices, and how this could be achieved in a way that feels authentic and meaningful.

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas

This session will share key insights from this partnership initiative, highlighting student perspectives on sustainability within HE, and the opportunities and challenges of embedding authentic ESD practices across disciplines.

3D: PRME Practice workshop

PRME Chapter UK & Ireland ESD Resource Exchange
Lead Presenter(s): Laura Steele, Queen's University Belfast

UK higher education is under sustained financial pressure, with many institutions reducing staff through redundancy programmes and hiring freezes. Remaining academics are consequently carrying heavier teaching loads and are often required to deliver unfamiliar modules at short notice. In parallel, students and other stakeholders are increasingly calling on universities to embed environmental and social sustainability in a meaningful, curriculum-wide manner rather than simply treating it as an optional add-on.

The United Nations–supported Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), established in 2007, seeks to advance sustainability in business and management education through seven Principles centred on societal impact and planetary stewardship. Over nearly two decades, PRME and its signatory institutions have produced a substantial body of education-for-sustainable-development (ESD) resources, many of which are transferable beyond the business and management context. The PRME UK & Ireland Chapter's Seed Funding Competition for Innovative Pedagogic Approaches and Teaching Practices, for example, has supported 21 novel projects to date, covering themes such as ecopedagogy, sustainability mindset, playful and joyful learning, design thinking, and cartoon-based teaching methods. As a requirement of funding, winners are required to produce shareable resources, including guides and playbooks.

This interactive session will introduce selected PRME resources and invite participants to highlight open-access materials they use or have developed in an "ESD Resource Exchange". The goal is to build a shared, practical repository of existing teaching resources that educators can readily adopt and adapt in a resource-constrained environment. Participants are invited to bring resources, whether developed by themselves or others, that they are willing and able to share (for example, links to relevant webpages). Insights and materials generated during the session will be disseminated after, including through an ESD Exchange blog.

Using systems and design thinking for solving SDG complex problems will be introduced in a workshop
Lead Presenter(s): Susanna Chui, De Montfort University

As the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require approaches capable of engaging with complexity, interdependence, and persistent "wicked" problems that resist linear solutions, this workshop proposes an AI-assisted systems and design thinking approach that integrates human-centred creativity with systems-level analysis, to support purpose-driven problem solving for SDG challenges.

Drawing on an award-winning PRME UK & Ireland initiative, the workshop introduces participants to a novel methodology that combines systems thinking, design thinking, and generative AI as a collaborative co-pilot rather than a substitute for human judgement. Participants will explore how AI can be used responsibly to surface system dynamics, reframe problem definitions, identify leverage points, and support the co-design of innovative and context-sensitive solutions aligned with the SDGs.

The workshop is highly interactive and practice-oriented. It begins with a brief conceptual grounding in systems and design thinking, followed by a live demonstration of a custom-built ChatGPT designed specifically to scaffold systems mapping, design ideation, and reflective inquiry. Participants will then engage in hands-on group activities, working collaboratively to diagnose a selected SDG challenge and prototype solution pathways using the AI-assisted framework.
Rather than positioning AI as an answer-generator, the workshop emphasises AI as an enabler of collective sense-making, learning, and co-creation, supporting participants to navigate complexity while retaining ethical awareness and human agency. The session is designed to be accessible to academics, practitioners, educators, and students, requiring no prior technical expertise.

By the end of the workshop, participants will have gained (1) a transferable AI-assisted methodology for addressing complex sustainability challenges, (2) a sampling experience in co-designing SDG-aligned solutions, and (3) insights into how AI can be integrated into responsible management education and impact-oriented innovation practices.

3E: ESD Mapping

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas

A Comparative Study of Curriculum Reform and Student Sustainability Competence Development in Chinese and UK Universities
Lead Presenter(s): Zheng Wang, University of Leeds

In the face of what Sterling (2025) describes as the global 'polycrisis,' higher education institutions are transitioning from teaching about sustainability to fundamentally re-evaluating the strategies, processes, and leadership required for deep systemic change. This presentation shares the preliminary findings of a comparative study between the University of Leeds (UK) and Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU, China), examining the trajectory from macro-level mandates to micro-level student outcomes.

Drawing on a robust data corpus—including national policy blueprints and 10 stakeholder interviews this presentation will deconstruct the 'institutional logic gap' inherent in both systems. Specifically, it contrasts China's state-led mandates (focused on 'Kecheng Sizheng') with the UK's market-responsive logic driven by the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the National Student Survey (NSS).

This synthesis tries to directly address the paradox of 'Engaging and Effective Teaching', illustrating how administrative pressures for metricized excellence can lead to 'pedagogic reductionism'. Furthermore, by identifying a potential 'competency trap', this study scrutinizes how the noble pursuit of 'Green Skills' is often atomized into technocratic indicators, potentially stifling the transformative shift in students' 'Being' (ontological development).

Participants will gain comparative insights into how divergent governance structures shape the recontextualization of global SDGs. By seeking to open the 'black box' of design-to-assessment alignment, this research proposes a critical roadmap for HEI leaders and educators striving to foster genuine, purposeful agency in the future workforce, beyond mere symbolic compliance.

A Comparative Analysis of SDG Integration Methodologies in Core Curricula Across UK Universities
Lead Presenter(s): Luke Farhall, University of Southampton

One way this shared blueprint of peace and prosperity provided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) could be achieved is recognising HEIs as change agents, as they have a unique ability to foster sustainability mindsets via curriculum design and teaching. Despite a growing policy emphasis on sustainability, previous studies suggest that UK universities exhibit wide variation in how, and how deeply, SDGs are embedded within core curricula along with wider sustainability embedding practices. In light of the absence of a coherent, standardised framework guiding effective sustainability integration practices, this research seeks to advance the development of a more unified and scalable approach through comparative analysis of data collected across multiple UK universities. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with curriculum and sustainability leads, supplemented with analysis of institutional documents. Data was thematically coded in NVivo to reveal trends in frequency of methodology type, key barriers and enablers to implementation, and the connectivity between methods as whole-institution and mixed-method approaches (e.g. curriculum integration, ESD and student led initiatives) demonstrate greater curricular coherence, particularly when supported by cross-institutional communities of practice. In contrast, reliance on extracurricular or symbolic approaches presented weaker student reach. However, few institutions exhibit systematic, long-term impact monitoring; evaluation is typically confined to reporting exercises or SDG mapping frequency rather than assessing learning outcomes or climate literacy. Amid escalating resource and staff capacity constraints in higher education, ensuring the value and strategic focus of sustainability integration has become an institutional imperative. By identifying key barriers and enablers, and drawing on insights from curriculum professionals, this study aims to inform strategically coherent and evidence-based approaches to SDG integration.

Mapping Climate and Sustainability Education Across the University of Cambridge
Lead Presenter(s): Katherin Garcia, University of Cambridge

This paper presents findings from a baseline scoping project examining the integration of Climate and Sustainability Education (CSE) across undergraduate degree programmes at the University of Cambridge. As higher education institutions face increasing pressure to respond to the climate crisis, there remains limited systematic understanding of how climate and sustainability are embedded across diverse disciplines, and to what depth.

The project adopts a mixed-methods institutional mapping approach, combining curriculum review, staff and student perspectives, and thematic analysis across four strands: (1) undergraduate curriculum coverage, (2) decolonisation and epistemic justice in climate education, (3) intersections between artificial intelligence and sustainability education, and (4) research–teaching linkages within the Faculty of Education.

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

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Findings, to be finalised in mid-March, will form Cambridge's first institutional baseline on CSE integration. Building on this, the University of Cambridge will use the outcomes to guide future curriculum development, monitoring, and leadership decisions. The session will share the framework, tools, and early insights, offering a model for other universities to assess and advance sustainability education.

Sustainable development goals (SDGs) implementation in higher education: the whole-university approach
Lead Presenter(s): Amal Abuzeinab, De Montfort University

This talk will present core findings and practical implications from our ongoing international research started in 2016.
We use multiple qualitative methods and comparative analysis to understand and to explain how universities are implementing SDGs internationally.
Our research is guided by three core principles:
1- Sustainable development goals are global challenges requiring local and contextualised solutions
2- All 17 sustainable development goals are interconnected
3- Goal 17: partnerships for the goals is a key enabler to implement all sustainable development goals.
Our initial results reported strong evidence around research, teaching, and extra-curricular activities. Our findings revealed that leading universities are adopting a whole-university approach starting from strategic leadership steering and decision-making to campus infrastructure. We will be presenting a practical guide for all universities aiming to implement sustainable development goals.

Thursday 16th April, 4pm to 4:55pm: Parallel Session 4

4A: Student-Staff Co-Creation

Co-Creating Professional Skills Education through Playful Learning and Relational Leadership
Lead Presenter(s): Susan Pinner, Manchester Metropolitan University

It has long been established that enhancing student learning through separate study/professional skills modules is ineffective (Wingate 2007). While students often perceive the content as irrelevant and disconnected from their chosen disciplines, evidence is clear that the deliberate development of core graduate skills remains vital for supporting progression and employability (Tuononen et.al. 2022).

Recognising this, our initiative for developing professional skills within a level 4 Sports & Exercise Sciences department (delivered to over 400 students annually) adopted a co-creation approach underpinned by playful learning principles and relational leadership to foster engagement, belonging, and relevance (Zeivots et al., 2024; Omland et al., 2025); enhancing agency, equity and inclusion (Bovill, 2022; Bergmark & Westman, 2015).

The session shares methods for integrating an active learning jigsaw technique into professional skills module design. Jigsaw, as a cooperative learning strategy improves learning, motivation, and social interaction (Cochon Drouet et al., 2023; Vives et al., 2024).

This session is intended for educators, curriculum designers, and academic leaders seeking innovative methods to enhance student engagement in large cohorts and non-specialist modules. Delegates will receive practical insights into applying co-design and playful learning in large-scale modules, strategies for embedding institutional priorities into student-led activities, and techniques for fostering relational leadership to build trust and shared responsibility (Stewart et al., 2025; French et al., 2025). Relational pedagogy emphasises care, clarity, and culture, which are critical for level 4 student success (Owusu-Agyeman & Moroeroe, 2023; Rahman et al., 2025). Participants will leave with actionable frameworks to implement jigsaw-based activities and digital collaboration tools within their own contexts to empower learners to take ownership of their success.

We evidence the benefits of the jigsaw approach through example. Student groups were separated to explore key components essential for professional success: module and degree learning outcomes, module and level assessment requirements, code of conduct, graduate attributes, and institutional strategies for education and sustainability. After investigating specific components with departmental staff, students returned to their groups to share/reflect on their learning. Groups then discussed what module content was required to be successful at level 4. Students synthesised findings collaboratively, constructing a shared understanding of expectations and criteria required. Students documented key topics that needed to be addressed in the module through Miro boards and digital sticky notes (Jainal & Shahrill, 2021). Data were

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collated by the module leader to feedback. Student reflection was reinforced through a clear mapped schedule of module delivery, highlighting where key topics were addressed. The module leader also drew up a co-created code of conduct.

Such jigsaw approaches demonstrate institutional impact in aligning module design with graduate attributes and sustainability strategies, ensuring long-term value for both learners and the university.

Full citations available on request

Peer Reflection & Object Based Learning as a Catalyst for Social and Environmental Skills Development in Higher Education
Lead Presenter(s): Clare Jackson, University of Leeds

Our student education research project explores approaches for 'Embedding and assessing student sustainability competences holistically'. This project is shaped in partnership with a one-year student co-design group, comprising five members of the university's Sustainability Society alongside continued student engagement. Our fellowship project challenges the lack of student voice representation within the literature on green and sustainability skills. Through a co-design model we created space to better understand student perceptions of these skills and competencies; how these thread across their everyday lives, studies, work and career aspirations; and what is needed to better support their understanding, development and articulation of these skills. A recent WonkHE article highlights how students are failing to recognise the variety and depth of skills gained from opportunities outside of their studies and how these respond to employer needs. This is compounded by the lack of support to articulate this skills gain. Our project proposes an approach for meeting this need and resources for maximising these opportunities.

Through a collaborative research model, a prototype peer-to-peer skills reflection circle has been designed, challenging the norm for individual self-reflection models. This is now being piloted across the following scenarios: curriculum, co-curriculum; paid sustainability roles; and student society membership. In this presentation we will share insights on our co-design approach and the skills development discussions this is igniting through the peer reflection model.

Creative participatory methods for co-created programme development
Lead Presenter(s): Caroline Edge, University of Salford

Photography at the University of Salford aim to co-create our programme as a living lab; enabling fluid exchange between practice, learning and research which empowers both our students and wider communities to become sustainable. Over the past 3 years we have been researching and testing practices for regenerative photographic education, informing the revalidation of our BA programme in 2025. This action research continues through ongoing programme development, in recognition that photography is an extractive process, implicated as an agent of colonisation.

This paper explores the application of participatory creative methodologies within student co-creation for programme development, one aspect of a mixed-method project. We used photo-elicitation to map students' learning journeys on our programme from pre-entry to date, to form the basis for individual and collective reflection. Photo-elicitation derives from participatory photography, centring on lived experience, and recognising 'other' ways of knowing inherent to creative practice, in the tradition of Paulo Freire's vision of education as a collective act for liberation.

Insights formed through this process challenged staff assumptions and raised questions of how class identity shapes learner experience within the institutional structures of higher education. The application and outcomes of this methodology in this context reflects and reinforces my team's belief in the need for systemic change, for integrating sustainability in process, and for siting power in our learning community.

4B: Civically Engaged ESD

Community Engaged Learning with sustainability at its heart
Lead Presenter(s): Angela Purdham, University of York

The University of York Sustainability Clinic, is an interdisciplinary optional module offered collaboratively by Environmental Sustainability at York (ESAY), Careers and Placements and the Department of Environment and Geography. Our unique module provides students with an invaluable opportunity to explore their role as leaders of change within the local community through a sustainability lens. This presentation will share our approach to community-engaged learning, considering both our ethos as a University for public good, and our role to prepare students for an ever-evolving world.

We invest time in partnerships to build strong relationships founded on trust and a mutual understanding of desired outcomes and strategic objectives. Co-curation of projects supports our partners in the local and regional community to

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tackle their sustainability challenges, building capacity, offering new and diverse perspectives and equipping them with the knowledge and skills to drive change with a lasting impact. Effective co-curation ensures our students and staff deepen their understanding of the sector, engage more fully with organisational vision and values, and gain fresh insight into community priorities.

Projects are grounded in a genuinely interdisciplinary ethos that draws strength from the diversity of disciplines, and in some cases, levels of academic study. This breadth of perspectives enriches the experience for students and partners alike, amplifying the value and impact of the work we do together.
Now in its third year, the Clinic continues to evolve as we build on feedback sought from students and partners, exploring in particular the Clinic's impact on our key stakeholders.

UoM's University Living Lab
Lead Presenter(s): Aadya Gupta, University of Manchester

Our University Living Lab (ULL) platform (www.universitylivinglab.org) delivers change for sustainable development at scale through students' existing assessments. Embracing ESD, the University Living Lab uses what we have - the assessments of 46,000 talented, interdisciplinary students - in an accessible opportunity that enhances student experience and employability, realising agency and making a difference.

We currently have over 150 projects, all of which are research insights needed by local and global community partners. All projects are framed with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. The projects are concept notes that can be adapted to coursework or dissertations, or become the assessment. Once completed within the course as normal, the platform returns quality research to the organisation. Any impact made through the research is returned to the student researcher. Impact has ranged from student research on urban resilience presented to the Rockefeller Foundation in New York, to shaping sustainable infrastructure in Manchester via writing a strategy for a school in rural Uganda, and many more. The interdisciplinary approach extends a critical and genuinely different lens on sustainable development challenges, shaping students' understanding of the complexities of sustainability, whilst adding value to the organisation. Two students have been employed by organisations that set their research; many more attribute employment to this experience. Led by our ULL Champions to amplify student priorities for sustainability, ULL facilitates a number of University strategic priorities, including co-constructing our research agenda. We would like to critically share this model, welcome feedback for growth, and extend offers of partnership.

Engaged Learning for Sustainable Changemaking
Lead Presenter(s): Paul Warwick, University of Plymouth
The Sustainability Hub at the University of Plymouth is supporting a civically engaged approach to curriculum development in Sustainability Education. This brief presentation will share how this is helping to support higher educators in developing educational initiatives that civically engage their students where the learning spaces of 'town and gown' are held in synergy. This presentation will share with participants an engaged learning framework that has been developed in support of a number of educational innovations, including a community engaged Net Zero programme and a 2nd year education undergraduate module where students tackle sustainable development challenges in the local community through service learning. A case study of these will briefly highlight some key learning points around the challenge of staff successfully curating and facilitating students developing as compassionate critical creatives.

4C: Whole Institution Approaches

From funded project to embedded ESD practice
Lead Presenter(s): Alina Congreve, UCL/Vitae
Across the sector, many ESD initiatives begin as grant-funded innovations: curriculum pilots, partnership projects, carbon literacy interventions or civic engagement programmes. They succeed locally and then stall. The issue is rarely quality, rather its structural fit. Embedding ESD beyond the project lifecycle requires more than enthusiasm, pilot funding or persuasive storytelling: it requires institutional translation.

This workshop reframes ESD sustainability not as a funding problem, but as an institutional design problem. The session draws on cross-sector cases explored through Vitae professional development work in the NERC funded OutE. Participants will work through an Embedding Pathway Framework structured around five strategic questions:

What institutional problem does this solve?

What evidence persuades leadership?

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Who must own or sponsor it?

Where can it live structurally?

What is one credible six-month action?

The session blends short analytical framing with facilitated peer design work. It combines short provocations (10 minutes), small-group structured design work (20 minutes), and plenary synthesis (10 minutes).

Sustainability snapshots – insights into developing ESD on an institutional scale at the OU
Lead Presenter(s): Teresa Cox, Open University

The Open University (OU) is the largest university in the UK, delivering online distance education at scale. Integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into module design has grown through thoughtful repurposing of existing frameworks and resources alongside the development of case studies to inspire curriculum leads across STEM, Arts and Social Sciences, Healthcare, Business and Law. By taking an asset-based approach to adapting and extending what already works, the OU has opened space for innovation and collaboration.

This contribution presents a snapshot of the diverse approaches the OU is taking to embed ESD across an entirely online, geographically distributed university. These include fully funded accredited Carbon Literacy Training; free online sustainability learning, a paid-for corporate sustainability offer, and the integration of sustainability in an established Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) framework.

Achieving the Responsible Futures (RF) accreditation in 2024 catalysed collaboration and integration of ESD across nations, faculties and distance-learning teams. Examples encompass multiple disciplines. For example, Maths and Statistics modules have successfully integrated sustainability into assessment strategies, and digital badges have been embedded within Education and Design modules to create a consistent and visible approach to sustainability skills development.

We will also outline how Learning Design colleagues led on the integration of sustainability into module design through the development of a range of learning design resources. Most recently, the team have built on the momentum created by RF and developed an online compendium of student reviewed, action-focused case studies which amplify effective ESD practice in curriculum activities across disciplines.

Friday 17th April, 9:15am to 10:10am: Parallel Session 5

5A: Diverse Practice-based

Sustainability first: Embedding sustainable considerations into everything we deliver
Lead Presenter(s): Jordan Turner, University of the Built Environment

The Introduction to Sustainability module at University of the Built Environment launched in September 2024. The module prepares students to engage in critical discussions around sustainability both in a built environment context, but also in everyday life, and has become a core module for every undergraduate student, irrespective of their degree programme. The module breaks down sustainability concepts and jargon, as well as giving practical examples of how to apply sustainability in daily and professional life. There is the need to consider the "bigger picture" with sustainability and show the topic is not exclusive to certain subjects, but should actually be embedded into everything we deliver. Far too often, students focus on the environmental impacts whilst ignoring or not putting the same attention on social and economic impacts. There is equally little or no knowledge surrounding the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and it is our job as educators to change this. Throughout the module we deliver, we focus on students' perceptions and understanding, and witness how this changes and develops as a result of our teaching and wider activities that the University provides throughout the course. Since the module's integration, we have witnessed a significant increase in students' engagement and wider understanding of sustainability, with an almost 8% increase in students actively practicing sustainability daily compared to before the module launch. Embedding sustainability as a module or within modules is proven to have a positive impact on promoting sustainability in students' day to day life.

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

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Learning-to-teaching: engaging alumni role models in sustainability education
Lead Presenter(s): Jocelyn Cornish, King's College London

This presentation reports a LEARN-APPLY-RETURN-TEACH loop initiative focused on education for sustainable development within an MSc Quality Improvement Dissertation module. The NHS Long Term Plan (2019) identifies key priorities that can be addressed by quality improvement projects (QIP). For example, the community care focus, medication review, avoidance of hospital admission and use of digital technology to improve the healthcare experience for patients. The NHS England (2025) Multi-professional Framework for Advanced Practice in England focuses on the capabilities of advanced practitioners in leading such transformations in care. Environmental sustainability is a core focus in this framework noting the importance of implementing environmental principles within leadership, governance and workforce development. Advanced practitioners are positioned to apply these principles towards sustainable clinical practice.

The presentation reports student experiences of learning sustainable healthcare principles, based on the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare educator pack (SusQI workshop), and use of a sustainability design to frame their QIPs, conducted in practice. The session provides examples of real-life projects and reported sustainable impacts for patient care e.g. prevention of hospital admission, reduction in medication, and compliance with social care referral processes. Alumni role models, invited to participate in teaching the workshop for the following student cohort, used their own projects to emphasise the practical application of the triple bottom line: environmental, financial and social sustainability. Evaluation of the experience of learning from role models in aiding the conceptualisation of sustainable project work for current students will be discussed.

Rigour, Reflection, and Responsiveness: Cultivating Sustainable Scientists through Academic Skills Education
Lead Presenter(s): Amy MacLatchy, University of Westminster

In 2015, the UN established 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the global community to achieve by 2030. Sustainable Development is defined as 'an aspirational ongoing process of addressing social, environmental and economic concerns to create a better world' (QAA, 2021). At the University of Westminster (UoW), we have committed to attaining UN Sustainable target 4.7, which pertains to 'Education for Sustainable Development' (ESD).

ESD serves as a pedagogical method through which educators can support graduates in acquiring the skills, knowledge, and experience needed to actively contribute to a society that prioritises environmental and ethical responsibility (QAA, 2021). Our foundation core module, 'Introduction to Academic Practice', centres on integrating the three pillars of sustainable development (social, environmental, and economic challenges) into undergraduate study skills. We argue that the development of sustainable academic practices throughout the course of undergraduate learning is central to enacting sustainable development goals as graduates. In this talk, we will share how we have embedded ESD into our study skills module for life scientists so that they may apply concepts of sustainability to their own practice as learners, and development as future scientists. We focus on three attributes: rigour, reflection and responsiveness, as key drivers of sustainable academic practice for life scientists. Through sharing of critical reflections and lived experiences, we hope to engage conversation about sustainable academic practices that can facilitate growth towards the UN SDGs.

QAA. (2021). Education for Sustainable Development Guidance Executive Summary. Available at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/education-for-sustainable-development-guidance-executive-summary.pdf Accessed on 19/02/2026

5B: Climate Action Initiatives

Turning sustainability knowledge into action: lessons from a student climate innovation programme
Lead Presenter(s): Rosie Whittingham and Alice Jackson, University of Leicester

The Climate Innovation Lab is a five-week, extra-curricular, work-related learning programme that integrates Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) with employability, innovation and real-world problem-solving. Delivered collaboratively by the University of Leicester's Careers and Employability Service and Sustainability Team, the programme provides students from all disciplines with a supported, hands-on environment to develop and apply sustainability knowledge in practice.

The Lab is structured around two key pedagogical elements. First, students complete accredited Carbon Literacy Training, developing a shared foundational understanding of climate science, carbon impacts and organisational responsibility. Second, this knowledge is immediately applied within interdisciplinary teams through a live climate and sustainability challenge. Using design thinking, stakeholder engagement and pitching methodologies, students develop and present a feasible solution in a final Dragons' Den-style pitch to an expert panel.

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

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This presentation will combine staff perspectives with student voices, reflecting on the intentional integration of skills development, sustainability literacy and employability outcomes, while student participants will share lived experiences of applying sustainability knowledge in a real-world context, including challenges, confidence-building and identity development as emerging sustainability practitioners. This presentation will be of interest to educators seeking practical models for delivering ESD beyond the classroom and into authentic, action-oriented learning spaces.

Growing food in higher education: educational possibilities and challenges
Lead Presenter(s): Perpetua Kirby, University of Sussex

This paper examines how and why undergraduates might be involved in growing food, with particular attention to the pedagogical possibilities that arise when embracing uncertainty through tending a garden. It draws on two undergraduate forest food garden modules at the University of Sussex, where students experience the complexity of sustainable food systems through co-planning, growing and sharing produce. Modelled on a naturally occurring forest with multi-layered perennial vegetation, the garden provides food, medicines, ecological benefits, and a shared space for education and community building. These interdisciplinary modules invite students to explore global questions about food and planetary justice, through situated, hands on, and unpredictable encounters with people, plants, elements and place.

Responding to calls to extend sustainability education outdoors, the paper reflects on purposes beyond cultivating green skills. Drawing on Biesta's (2022) notion of 'world centred' education, it considers how food growing might help students become attentive to what the world asks of them. This presentation illustrates slow, embodied, affective, and deliberative pedagogies used in the classroom and garden, and explores how these approaches support students to encounter the garden and its global climate and ecological implications. It examines whether this attunes students and tutors to the ethical dimensions of the interdependence and situatedness of food systems.

Using module research data, and insights from a tour of U.S. campus farms and gardens, this presentation considers how teaching that welcomes uncertainty can create space for deeper engagement. It highlights what works well and challenges, offering an open account of outdoor, relational, more than human education.

Empowering Student-led Climate Action: Three Case Studies
Lead Presenter(s): Emma Wood and Jennifer Dranttel, Loughborough University

Working within a regenerative pedogeological framework, this presentation introduces three case studies from the BA (Hons) Textile Design Programme at Loughborough University. Each case study addresses different levels of climate action within the programme from the formal curriculum (module ACB152), the informal curriculum (formation of the Student Sustainability Action Group), and extra-curricular activities (using workshops such as Climate Fresk and Textiles Untangled). These three examples also operate by employing different time scales for impact: in the short, mid-range, and long-term future.

Each case study showcases the opportunity to give students the knowledge, agency and power to be changemakers, now and in the future, empowering them to take any step they can toward climate justice for their generation. The results are student-led and student-forward, enabling avenues for climate action as well as champion co-learning. The series of case studies allow students agency and voice, not just as stakeholders, but as leaders within ESD.

5C: Emotions and Activism

Engaging the educational elephant in the room: Emotions
Lead Presenter(s): Cathy d'Abreu, Oxford Brookes University/SEEd/Our Shared World

The challenge of designing and delivering effective climate, sustainability and environmental education (CSEE) is THE call of our times. Crowded curricula, limited staff readiness, capacity and support, the complexity of multidisciplinary subject matter, and the existential punch of the polycrises, place today's educators in exceptionally challenging terrain. It is perhaps unsurprising then, that the elephant in the educational room is the pivotal role of emotions - deeply embedded in the current threats to human and natural systems (IPCC, 2023; National Emergency Briefing, 2025).

From an educational perspective, there is intensifying interest in emotions in CSEE and the corresponding interrelationships between wellbeing, learning and action, though this has yet to meaningfully filter through to classroom practice. Acknowledging the impacts of climate anxiety and distress (Hickman et al., 2021), recognising the broad tapestry of climate emotions (Pihkala, 2022), and embracing 'constructive hope' (Ojala, 2021) are increasingly forwarded as central to designing purposeful CSEE. Connected to these individualised emotions are more collective, relational and political dimensions of

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas

emotion, as engaged in pedagogies of discomfort (Boler and Zembylas, 2002), transgressive pedagogies (Wals, 2021), and 'critical emotional awareness' (Ojala, 2023) and others.

Educational movements such as ESD, EfS and CCE increasingly highlight the need for Transformative Learning pedagogies (Wals, 2009), in shaping a 'new theory of education', not just of learning (Biesta, 2009). Transformative Learning demands a fundamental shift in learners' mindsets (Mezirow, 2009), their ways of 'seeing, knowing and doing', outlined in Sterling's Triang model (Sterling, 2024: 7). Yet such learning is emotionally challenging and often painful, generating uncertainty and engaging liminality (Taylor and Cranton, 2012; Förster et al., 2019). This emotional labour is negotiated by educators themselves, as well as on behalf of their learners.

Against this backdrop, the Hope Wheel proposes a model for constructive hope-based pedagogy that foregrounds emotions in CSEE. Drawing together recent multidisciplinary research with insights from the development and delivery of educational programmes, the Hope Wheel identifies three interconnected elements: handrails that educators can hold on to when engaging emotionally demanding content (honesty, awareness, spaceholding and action); guardrails that signal sensitivities requiring care (climate anxiety, mis-/disinformation and false hope); and lenses that invite holistic exploration of connections across complex societal and planetary challenges (complexity, justice, nature, creativity and empathy).

Original article link here https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1347392/full

Full citations available on request

Teaching activism: Reflections on red lines, reactions and radicalism
Lead Presenter(s): Zoe Robinson, Keele University/Lund University

This presentation explores the experiences of three years of teaching a module focused on activism. The L5 module sits as part of a 'Global Challenge Pathway' in Climate Change and Sustainability at Keele University that can be taken by students from any discipline (curriculum space allowing), and aims to introduce students to activism as a mechanism to drive change for a more sustainable future. After an exploration of different forms of activism, Theory of Change, as well as behavioural change theories and personal case studies of activists, students are required to drive their own 'activist' project, with free rein on the issue of focus and methods employed – within the bounds of the law! The L5 students are supported by L6 peer mentors undertaking the L6 module on the Global Challenge Pathway and who had experienced the activism module the year before.

The contribution takes an autoethnographic approach, drawing on experiences of designing and delivering an activist-focused module, considering the reasons for the module design and its ambitions, reflections on what the invisible red lines may be, and reflecting on my own perceptions of the student experience drawing from student feedback, reflections, and their project choices and execution.

The experience of running this module shows that students tend to start the module with an antithetical stance towards activism, strongly influenced by negative media portrayals and narratives of activists and their impacts; many also struggled to identify an issue that they wanted to try and influence, and focused on non-confrontational forms of activism. By the module's end students reported a softening of views on activists and an increased sense of personal agency to drive change. Yet, as an educator, I am left with questions on the distinction between action and activism; and what determines the red-lines that we set ourselves in driving activism-based ESD.

Friday 17th April, 10:15am to 11:10am: Parallel Session 6

6A: Diverse Practice-based

Widening Participation Through Sustainable Science Education
Lead Presenter(s): Aaisha Patel, Liverpool John Moores University

Learners from a socially deprived background are underrepresented in Higher Education (Gorard, 2010), experiencing multiple barriers, including low self-esteem and self-efficacy (Simon et al, 2020). Initiatives from the Royal Society of Chemistry (Chemistry for All, 2020) and Uni Connect (Office for Students, 2022) are exploring strategies to diminish these

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas

barriers and facilitate the transition into Higher Education. The Absolute Chemistry Research Group (ACRG), have an underpinning ethos and commitment to catalyse social inclusion and change within education.

A cross-university team with expertise in Chemistry, Education and Outreach, have worked in partnership with local primary schools in disadvantaged communities to develop teachers to deliver a high-quality science learning experience rooted in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The aim was to increase teacher confidence to provide engaging learning activities that raise awareness of global challenges, while empowering young people to create positive change within their own communities. A programme of interactive workshops were delivered, focusing on key themes such as climate action and responsible consumption, whilst promoting community cohesion and core values for inclusive education. The project supported teachers by providing curriculum-aligned resource packs and lesson materials. These resources enabled schools to build the SDGs and pupil-centred learning into their pedagogic practise, strengthening the long-term impact of the programme and embedding sustainability education within everyday classroom practice.

We will reflect upon the enriched understanding of the SDGs from undergraduate students and the community, drawing upon the overall implementation through the context of research, education and leadership. Feedback from teachers showed increased understanding of sustainability issues, greater confidence in discussing global challenges and stronger interest in science-based learning.

The experience of contextualised science will improve learner awareness of where studying science can lead, contributing to positive social change for underrepresented learners. A science education is crucial to face society's social, economic and environmental challenges, guiding global efforts toward sustainable development.

Full citations available on request

Sustainable Skills by Design: Co-creating digital learning for sustainable healthcare education
Lead Presenter(s): Melanie Maddison, King's College London

The Clinical Skills Sustainability Project is a cross-faculty collaboration involving students, academic staff and professional services at King's College London. It aims to reduce the environmental and financial impact of clinical skills education by embedding the principles of sustainability in teaching practice, in alignment with King's Climate & Sustainability Action Plan.

The project builds upon an earlier audit which demonstrated that a significant proportion of non-infective clinical waste created in skills sessions was suitable for alternative disposal, reuse, and recycling strategies. In response, the team applied co-design and the Sustainable Quality Improvement methodology (SuSQI) (Mortimer et al., 2018) to test and implement several small acts of change. These included finding alternative waste disposal methods and increasing sustainability awareness through the creation of a digital induction and learning package. This digital resource aims to increase awareness of environmentally responsible behaviours, reinforce correct waste segregation practices, and model sustainable approaches to clinical education, responding directly to identified needs for improved sustainability knowledge among learners and staff. The digital format also facilitates scalability across programmes and sites, positioning it as a sustainable pedagogical tool.

By embedding sustainability into operational practices in education, the project seeks to equip students with the skills and mindset of the future leaders in healthcare, acting as role models in sustainable practice and contributing to system-level change aligned with the NHS Net Zero agenda (NHSE, 2022). By disseminating the methodology, collaborative processes and digital resources underpinning the intervention, the team aims to inspire wider adoption of similar resources across health education institutions.

References
Mortimer, F., Isherwood, J., Wilkinson, A., Vaux, E. (2018) Sustainability in quality improvement: redefining value. Future Healthc. J., 5 (2) (2018), pp. 88-93, 10.7861/futurehosp.5-2-88
National Health England. [NHSE]. (2022). Delivering a NetZero National Health Service 2022. NHSE/NHSI. https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2022/07/B1728-delivering-a-net-zero-nhs-july-2022.pdf

Student-led videos to highlight UN-SDGs in undergraduate modules
Lead Presenter(s): Patrick Hamilton, University of Exeter

At the University of Exeter there has been a drive to integrate the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs) into undergraduate degree programmes. But, do students recognise them in their modules? To find out we organised a workshop, where students studying degree programmes in the Department of Clinical and Biomedical Sciences gathered their

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas

experiences using both ‘systems maps’ and ‘empathy maps’. Few students recognised sustainability in their modules, and none recognised the acronym ‘SDG’. They also expressed the need to see leadership from people they could relate to, and for opportunities to make a difference. In this project we attempted to address these challenges by exploring the potential of students as co-creators. Pairs of students have been working to create short videos to highlight the links between their modules and UN-SDGs. These videos will be displayed on student-facing websites including the Moodles of the relevant modules. Students chose the following SDGs: Good Health and Wellbeing, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Affordable and Clean Energy, Reduced Inequalities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action and Life Below Water. Topics varied from the impacts of antimicrobial resistance and social inequalities to the impacts of generative artificial intelligence and laboratory practices on the environment. These videos will be available for other students to view over the next year. We have assessed the impact of the project on the participating students using questionnaires, reflective logs and a focus group. They have commented on the development of specialist knowledge, improved skills in collaborating with colleagues and lecturers, and science communication skills.

6B: Whole Institution Approaches

From strategy to lasting curriculum change: Embedding EfS at King’s College London
Lead Presenter(s): Louise Logan, King’s College London

Whole-institution approaches to Education for Sustainability, or ESD, are becoming increasingly common, with many institutions now committing to embedding EfS across all of their taught programmes via university-wide strategies. But who owns this work, and how does this translate to meaningful curriculum change on the ground?

This presentation considers the opportunities and challenges of this approach through the development of EfS at King’s College London from 2023-2026. King’s Climate & Sustainability is a three-year transformation programme seeking to embed sustainability across education, research and operations. This presentation will reflect on the impact of a centralised, whole-institution approach to embedding EfS – including a central fund for EfS - and outline plans for the second phase of embedding EfS (2026-2030), which has been developed following consultations with each of our 9 faculties. It will consider the disconnects that can prevent embedding at scale and outline the collaborative efforts that have supported the development of EfS. In particular, it will highlight the work that took place across faculties, directorates, and functions to consider the key roles that have enabled progress.

From Advocacy to Action: Developing Programme Action Plans for ESD Integration at the University of Strathclyde
Lead Presenter(s): Scott Strachan, University of Strathclyde

This presentation from the University of Strathclyde outlines the staged process designed to support degree programme teams and Departments in developing Programme Action Plans (PAPs) for the integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). This structured approach ensures alignment with institutional quality assurance (QA) processes and provides a consistent, University-wide method for embedding ESD as Strathclyde transitions from advocacy to practical implementation.

The work is driven by a key strategic objective and KPI for 2030, which states that all education programmes will include programme-level learning outcomes related to ESD by 2027/28. These outcomes must reflect UNESCO’s ESD competencies, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and appropriate pedagogical approaches.

The presentation will guide the audience through each stage of the process: securing strategic commitment, undertaking curriculum mapping, and ultimately producing an ESD Programme Action Plan. It will provide a practitioner-focused account, highlighting both the steps involved and the collaborative structures that enabled this work. Central to the process was the establishment of a Faculty ESD Working Group, comprising Departmental ESD Curriculum Review Leads, who have played a key role in facilitating, coordinating, and championing ESD integration at Department level.

A significant focus will be placed on the QA dimensions of this work. The presentation will address practical questions such as: What is an ESD Programme Action Plan? Why is it required? What should it contain? It will also explore how ESD can be effectively articulated within Programme-Level Learning Outcomes, how it should appear in Module Descriptor Forms, and how existing (and new) faculty review mechanisms can assure and support meaningful ESD integration.

Finally, the presentation will reflect on the challenges encountered so far in developing and implementing this shared, staged approach to embedding ESD across the curriculum, which is still ongoing, and remains a work in progress.

Culture, Technology and Materiality: Embedding the Design Council Skills for Planet Framework
Lead Presenter(s): Stuart Lawson, De Montfort University

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas

The School of Design Innovation has made a detailed commitment to embed the Design Council's Skills for Planet framework across all of its diverse curricula. The specific skills vary between disciplines, with each ensuring that graduates will gain the Green Skills and specialist sector knowledge needed to design responsibly for a circular, regenerative and climate-resilient future.

The presentation will focus on how the School has delivered this strategy – that follows on from embedding SDGs and introducing regenerative design – and how the connected interventions of digital technology integration, a Circular and Regenerative Materials Library and a unified approach to authentic and inclusive assessment underpins the School's culture and ESD strategy.

At every level, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills in systems thinking, circular decision making and environmental and social impact. The Materials Library will inspire curiosity, experimentation and circular decision making, and this explicit materiality will augment the wide range of teaching that delivers the Skills for Planet, through activities such as aligned live industry briefs, impact evaluation, material stewardship, and design for circularity.

These integrated approaches will create affordances in pedagogy, research, and develop a culture of graduate agency, as well as underpinning the development of Skills for Planet competencies, offering a scalable model for responsible design.

6C: Philosophical Critique

How Modernity Shapes Education? - Modernity through stories and identity
Lead Presenter(s): Shweta Salvi, De Montfort University

Interactive Workshop
How Modernity Shapes Education? - Modernity Through Stories And Identity
The aim is to examine colonised knowledge and what's accepted as globalised or universal knowledge—what we'll call the "modern project" in this workshop. The idea is not to define modernity or label it good or bad, but to observe how modernity (the modern story) manifests and shapes us (both our collective and individual identities) from within.

Introduction - 10 Mins
• A brief exploration of why stories matter and why it's crucial to tell and embrace different narratives.
• Discuss how identity shapes storytelling.
• Introduction to modernity through the work of Vanessa Machado De Oliveira, Vandana Shiva, and others.
• Use Slido to create a word cloud capturing participants' perspectives on modernity. Introduce Vanessa's Heads Up tool, which will guide the next activity.

The Patterns We Inherit - 10 Mins
In groups, participants will use the Heads Up tool to identify patterns of monoculture in the modern mindset. The goal is to build awareness of how these patterns appear in our educational systems—and in ourselves—becoming unconscious defaults that determine what counts as valid knowledge or success.

Alternative To The Modern Curriculum - 15 Mins
In groups, participants can brainstorm methods, tools, theories, values, and representation to base the curriculum on by considering questions like:
• What values would you centre the curriculum on? (Values)
• How and what would be taught? (Methods)
• Who would teach? (Representation)
• What would count as "success"? (Tools - certification/merit), and
• Come up with a cool name for the curriculum!

5 Minutes Discussion on the designed curriculum from the groups.

Friday 17th April, 11:35am to 12:30pm: Parallel Session 7

7A: Sector-wide Evaluation

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas

How do we know if ESD is working?
Lead Presenter(s): Georgina Gough, UWE Bristol

This session will explore various indicators which may be used to evidence impact of ESD, and will consider tensions and practicalities associated with the application of these in HE. Consideration will be made of scales of impact from individual to societal. The workshop element of the session will enable participants to share and to vote on indicators which they feel are best suited to demonstrate impact of ESD on staff and students. The expectations of subject benchmark statements, accreditations and league tables will inform this session. The session will facilitate interaction between participants.

Academic work of relevance to this session includes:
Brent, E.D., Sustarsic, M., Chiba, M., McCormick, M., Goo, M., & Perriton, S. (2020). Achieving and monitoring education for sustainable development and global citizenship: A systematic review of the literature. Sustainability, 12(4), 1383.
Ssossé, Q., Wagner, J., & Hopper, C. (2021). Assessing the impact of ESD: Methods, challenges, results. Sustainability, 13(5), 2854.
Veidemane, A. (2022). Education for sustainable development in higher education rankings: Challenges and opportunities for developing internationally comparable indicators. Sustainability, 14(9), 5102.
White, R.M., Hayles, C.S. and Gough, G. (2025) Chapter 11 Monitoring and Evaluating Education for Sustainable Development: Co-Creating Quality Learning Experiences and Outcomes. In DOI: 10.4324/9781003451563-5
White, R.M., Möbius, K., King, B., Leask, K., Peres, S., Walker, J. and Higgins, P. (2023) A Handbook for Monitoring and Evaluating Education for Sustainable Development in Higher Education. Produced for QAA UK. Available at https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/collaborative-enhancement-projects/education-for-sustainable-development/monitoring-and-evaluating-education-for-sustainable-development-in-higher-education

Learning for Sustainability in Initial Teacher Education: a national Framework
Lead Presenter(s): Kirsten Leask, Learning for Sustainability Scotland

'Learning for Sustainability' (LfS); an integrated holistic concept and an approach to life and learning, is a core cross-cutting theme in the Professional Standards for teachers in Scotland, as set out by the General Teaching Council for Scotland. All Initial Teacher Education (ITE) institutions in Scotland have an important role in supporting and collaborating with their own staff, student teachers, and external bodies such as placement leads, to imagine and develop approaches to weaving LfS throughout their practice. This Framework has been co-created by, with, and for members of the ITE community in Scotland to support this. This presentation will share more about the background to and co-creation of the Framework, and how it is being used in Scottish ITE institutions to support student and newly-qualified teachers to develop the skills, knowledge and values to weave LfS across their own individual practice and the wider activity of the settings in which they teach. The Framework will be of interest to those working in Initial Teacher Education institutions or in policy relating to ITE/HE.

7B: Diverse Practice-based

Incorporating education for sustainability into the built environment curriculum
Lead Presenter(s): Robert Read, King's College London

The built environment is directly responsible for 25% of the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions (including emissions from both the operation of buildings and their construction, maintenance, and demolition). Therefore, built environment and construction related programmes should be central to universities' efforts to incorporate sustainability into the curriculum. This presentation draws on the speaker's experience of developing the module "Global ESG Law and Construction Projects" for the University of Melbourne and incorporating education for sustainability into the MSc Construction Law and Dispute Resolution programme at King's College London, as well as his research in this area, in order to show how sustainability can be incorporated into the built environment and construction related curriculum.

Areas which the presentation will touch on will include contract drafting for sustainability, the incorporation of environmental objectives into procurement processes, the extent to which sustainable construction projects are supported by legal and contractual frameworks, aspects of environmental law applicable to construction projects, and how sustainability issues may feed into or result in construction disputes. The presentation will also consider the benefits of incorporating sustainability into the built environment and construction related curriculum, both for students and for the wider built environment and construction sector.

Designing and Delivering Impactful Sustainable Education in Marketing
Lead Presenter(s): Emily Bastable, University of Southampton

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas

The Rio Sustainability Declaration (United Nations, 1992) argues a moral and ethical priority to meet the needs and demands of both present and future generations. Higher Education Institutions have responded by including sustainability as a strategic pillar; to positively impact environmental and societal outcomes, by encouraging students to adapt their behaviours and choices (Cripps and Bobeva, 2025; Kecskes et al., 2017).

Teaching business and education lead the authors to reflect on their responsibility, in developing the next generation of practitioners. 'Sustainable Marketing' is an undergraduate, level 6 module which explores marketing as a force for good. Our research evaluates the impact of live client project authentic assessment, externally accredited reflective learning, and UN SDG-aligned employability green skills engagement, to expose compelling evidence of improved student personal and professional sustainability knowledge and behaviours.

Employing the SKE Module Framework (NCIA, 2025), combined with instructor reflections, we consider three research questions: to what extent did students: 1) achieve intended learning outcomes (i.e. critical, applied understanding of sustainable marketing approaches); 2) solve live client problems by communicating novel solutions; and 3) demonstrate outcomes above and beyond the task (i.e. enhanced green skills)?

Through scaffolded action-learning and assessment, students demonstrated improved personal confidence and receptiveness towards green employability destinations. We were delighted to observe student's personal and professional commitments to sustainable behaviours, encompassing their life on and off campus, and into their graduate futures. By reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of our approach, we hope to inspire debate of what works in ESD teaching and learning.

Cripps, K. and Bobeva, M. (2025) 'Career and employability learning through storytelling for the sustainable development goals', The International Journal of Management Education, 23(3), p. 101211. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2025.101211.
Kecskes, K., Joyalle, J., Elliott, E. and Sherman, J.D.B. (2017) 'Sustainability of Our Planet and All Species as the Organizing Principle for SLCE', Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 23(2), pp. 159–164.
National Civic Impact Accelerator (NCIA) 2025. Civic Commitments in Partnership Practice: Embedding Student Knowledge Exchange with Community Anchors, Civic Leadership Module. Available at: https://civicuniversitynetwork.co.uk/resources/civic-leadership/

Clinical application of sustainability education by Advanced Practitioners: Longitudinal evaluation
Lead Presenter(s): Jocelyn Cornish, King's College London

Background: Ensuring sustainable quality improvement (QI) in healthcare is essential to enhance patient outcomes and service efficiency. Advanced Practitioners (APs) play a key role in this, as defined by NHS England (2025) through their expertise in clinical practice, leadership and management, education, and research. Quality issues and variations in access to healthcare services require structured improvement approaches. QI methods enable application of systematic change management to address quality issues and variations. While some studies focus on barriers to project longevity (Elliott, 2016) or application of sustainability QI practice in medical education (Marsden et al., 2021), there is limited evidence on the clinical impact of sustainability education in QI projects, particularly within Advanced Practice programmes.

The MSc Advanced Clinical Practice programme dissertation requires students to run QI projects in their clinical organisations. Students identify a local problem, engage stakeholders and apply change management methods in this work with a focus on sustainability and project longevity, reinforced through the assessment criteria. This presentation evaluates the impact of the ACP students' QI dissertations as an assessment, exploring project effectiveness in supporting improved patient care, service delivery, workforce development and attention to environmentally sustainable practice.

Methods: Longitudinal qualitative content analysis of projects over five cohorts between 2019 and 2025 exploring project focus, barriers and enablers of successful, sustainable change aiding understanding of how education for sustainability had been applied.

Discussion: The work offers valuable insights for healthcare education, embedding sustainability in the curriculum and application of learning in clinical practice, as well as methods for longitudinal evaluation

7C: Student-led Initiatives

Student co-creation of resources to support Aston Universities Powerskills initiative
Lead Presenter(s): Steve Russell, Aston University

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas

In September 2025, Aston University introduced a suite of “Powerskills” across all undergraduate programmes, including a strand dedicated to environmental sustainability. These Powerskills have since been systematically embedded within teaching across the University’s Colleges, ensuring that sustainability principles are meaningfully integrated throughout the curriculum.

Within the Biomedical Science programme, students co-created a range of educational resources focused on environmental sustainability and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They subsequently delivered workshops to first-year Biosciences students and conducted pre- and post-session evaluations to assess the impact of these resources on students’ understanding.

Sustainability is a central pillar of Aston’s 2030 Strategy and aligns with the University’s Responsible Futures accreditation, demonstrating a strategic commitment to embedding sustainability across the student learning experience. Through this initiative, Biomedical Science students were able to capture a snapshot of sustainability awareness within the first-year cohort while also deepening their own understanding of global sustainability challenges.

A Creative Zine on The Evolution of a Student-Led Module
Lead Presenter(s): Adithi Sathiyan, King’s College London

Adhithi is the Sustainability Education Assistant at King's Climate & Sustainability, which is King’s College London’s transformation programme working to embed sustainability through education, research and operations. They will be presenting a creative, student-led case study of the Sustainability & Climate module on our online learning platform, KEATS, developed in partnership with SOS-UK for the Responsible Futures programme. This contribution reflects on how the module has evolved since its launch in 2021, from a co-created pilot responding to student demand for meaningful climate education, to a cross-disciplinary extracurricular space reaching students from diverse academic and cultural backgrounds.

This presentation will offer a snapshot of a creative zine that documents this journey. Selected extracts from a forthcoming publication will be shared that illustrate three key themes: why the module was created, how it was co-designed with students, and what impact it has had. Through visual timelines, anonymised testimonials, creative assessment examples (which is the final submission for students), and images from exhibitions and seminar series events, the presentation will demonstrate how sustainability education can move beyond awareness-raising toward agency, experimentation and practice.

Adithi will also reflect on their role as Sustainability Education Assistant, sharing insights into stewarding a student-developed module within an institutional setting. This includes lessons learned about engagement (including from experiences supporting events such as film screenings), the value of volunteer-led Take Action Teams, and how extracurricular sustainability spaces can complement formal curricula. They will briefly connect this to their wider sustainability work, including the Fossil Free Careers campaigning, being the Student Representative at the Sustainability Steering Group and their recent ‘Young Climate Leader’ award from Team London Bridge, to show how modules like this can act as incubators for long-term student leadership.

This contribution will be of interest to participants exploring educational co-creation with students, informal curriculum models, and Responsible Futures alignment. It offers a practical example of embedding sustainability through partnership pedagogy, creative assessment, and institutional collaboration while remaining adaptable as a living, evolving model.

Student Led Sustainability Through Society Driven Governance at Manchester Met
Lead Presenter(s): Reece Buckley, Manchester Metropolitan University

Across UK universities, sustainability initiatives are often framed through top-down curriculum design and estates strategy. Yet one of the most influential student spaces — societies — is typically absent from institutional planning. As a Student Officer at Manchester Metropolitan University, I observed a consistent pattern: students across diverse societies were passionate about activism and social change but lacked a cohesive structure that enabled them to act collectively. This gap became the catalyst for a project designed to strengthen student led engagement and support our SOS-UK Responsible Futures accreditation.

The project began with exploratory mapping, focus groups and a two-month pilot as a Society Sustainability Consultant. During this phase, I developed the Sustainability Tracker for McrMet Student Societies, a tool enabling societies to reflect on their practices and identify opportunities for sustainable action in ways aligned with their identity and capacity. Growing interest in the Tracker revealed the need for a dedicated student team to co-lead and scale the work. This led to the creation of the Sustainability - Student Advisory Board (SSAB): a voluntary, hybrid, student-led governance group bringing together passionate students from across disciplines. The Board codesigns sustainability initiatives, supports societies using the

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas

Tracker, and strengthens student representation. The impact has been significant. What began with four pilot societies has grown to 18 societies actively embedding sustainability, from the sport of Archery to the Formula One Society.

Students have developed confidence, critical awareness and collaborative practices, forming connections with charities, external partners and each other. Crucially, this growth is the foundation of a long-term student led legacy. The Tracker and Advisory Board model is now under development to position it to expand into all societies, enabling future student leaders to inherit a scalable, adaptable framework that embeds sustainability into the heart of student life.

This presentation will share the evolution of this model, its early outcomes, challenges encountered, and its potential as a replicable framework for embedding sustainability within co-curricular spaces. The presentation will be of interest to anyone focused on enhancing student engagement with sustainability issues.

Click the session link for full summaries or abstracts for each contribution. Theme key below:

Practice-sharing	Strategic Approaches	Student-Staff Collaboration	Big Ideas