

## Education for Sustainable Development Guidance

March 2021



# Introducing the QAA / Advance HE Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Guidance

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De Montfort University 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021

### Advance HE Members

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/education-sustainable-development-higher-education>

### QAA Members

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/education-for-sustainable-development>



# Hello from Plymouth



Paul Warwick Associate Professor in Sustainable Education and Civic Futures,  
Plymouth Institute of Education

Centre for Sustainable Futures a 'community of practice' providing

- A collaborative social learning space
- Networking opportunities to support sustainable educational innovation and civic engagement
- An incubation space for creative partnership building in sustainable educational change, applied research and knowledge exchange.

Over the last 15 months we have been involved in a steering group helping to revise the guidance first issued by QAA and the HEA on Education for Sustainable Development in 2014



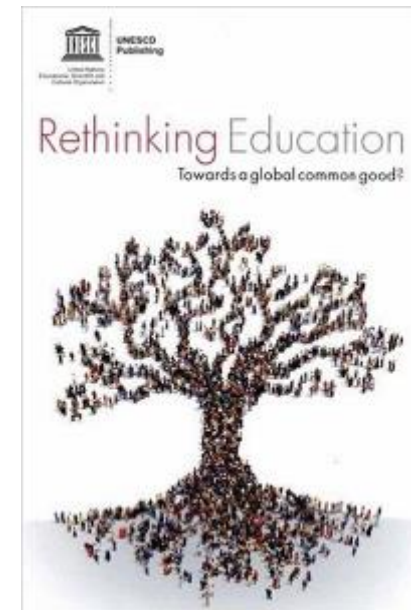


# Where has this latest ESD Guidance come from?

## Landmark definition of Sustainable Development

***"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."***

(from the Brundtland Commission/World Commission on Environment and Development's report **Our Common Future** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).



Education for sustainable development is the process of equipping students with the knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes needed to work and live in a way that safeguards environmental, social and economic wellbeing, both in the present and for future generations. QAA 2014:5

Contemplation Point – How did I get here and what experiences do I bring?

## Section 1 – Introducing Education for Sustainable Development

- What Is Education for Sustainable Development?
- The role of higher education in creating a sustainable future
- UN Sustainable Development Goals



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# Definition of ESD

*“ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning, and is an integral part of quality education. ESD is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society.”*

UNESCO, 2019



Why do we need this revised guidance now?  
Because the global landscape has changed so much in the last 5 years



Further information on the UN SDGs

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<https://sdg-tracker.org/>



<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/research-news/2016-06-14-how-food-connects-all-the-sdgs.html>

Contemplation Point – Do the SDGs need to be core to our notion of quality in HE?  
What might that mean for our quality assurance processes?



# Why do we need this revised guidance now? Because Higher Education needs to respond to the student voice

## 2020 National Union of Students (NUS) Skills Survey

Key changes compared to previous years of the research include:

- 91% of respondents agreed their place of study should actively incorporate Sustainable Development - up from 88% in 2014;
- 83% would like to see Sustainable Development actively incorporated and promoted across all courses - up from 71% in 2014.
- 65% say sustainable development is something they would like to learn more about compared with 59% in 2018-19
- 73% say the chance to work in an organisation / company that makes a difference to environmental and social issues is a factor they'll consider when applying for jobs, compared to 69% in 2018-19

You can find the report online here: <https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/resources/sustainability-skills-2019-20-he>



Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/53723524>



Image source <https://www.plymouthart.ac.uk/blog/news/plymouth-college-of-art-supports-the-global-climate-strikes>

Contemplation Point – What are our students asking for, hoping for, expecting to have in their HE experience – how can we find out and how can we work with them as partners in educational change?

## Section 2 – Getting Started with Education for Sustainable Development

- ESD as curriculum framing
- ESD intersections across curricula
- Consulting key players



# The interdisciplinary nature of ESD



Contemplation Point – Do the SDG's provide an ideal opportunity for us to enhance interdisciplinary learning opportunities for all our students?

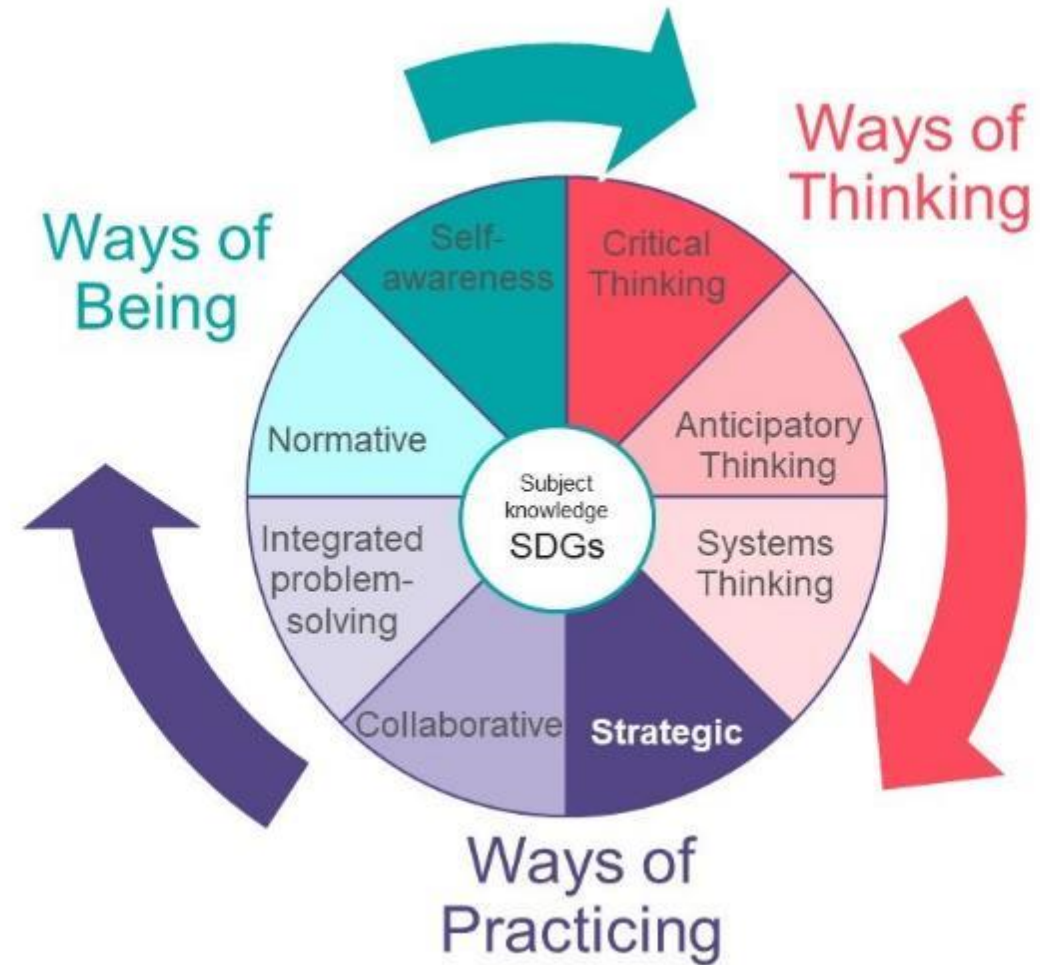
## Section 3 – Teaching, Learning and Assessment for Education for Sustainable Development

- Key competencies for sustainability
- Course and module learning outcomes
- Assessment for, of and as learning



# Teaching, Learning and Assessment for ESD

## UNESCO key competencies for sustainability





# Developing Future Fit Graduates - Compassionate Critical Creatives



<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/about-us/teaching-and-learning/plymouth-university-compass>

Contemplation Point – What competencies do I think future fit DMU graduates need?



# What are effective ways to teach and learn ESD?

Pedagogic research continues to highlight a move towards participatory and active learning approaches in ESD:

- Role play, games and simulations
- Group dialogue and deliberation
- Case studies of positive change initiatives
- Place based learning – wild and nature based
- Interdisciplinary learning
- Service Learning – Community Engaged Learning
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Solution-based learning – action research



Contemplation Point – Does ESD require that I change/transition my practice – what support do I need to do this and what can I offer to help others?

## Section 4 – Annotated references and resources

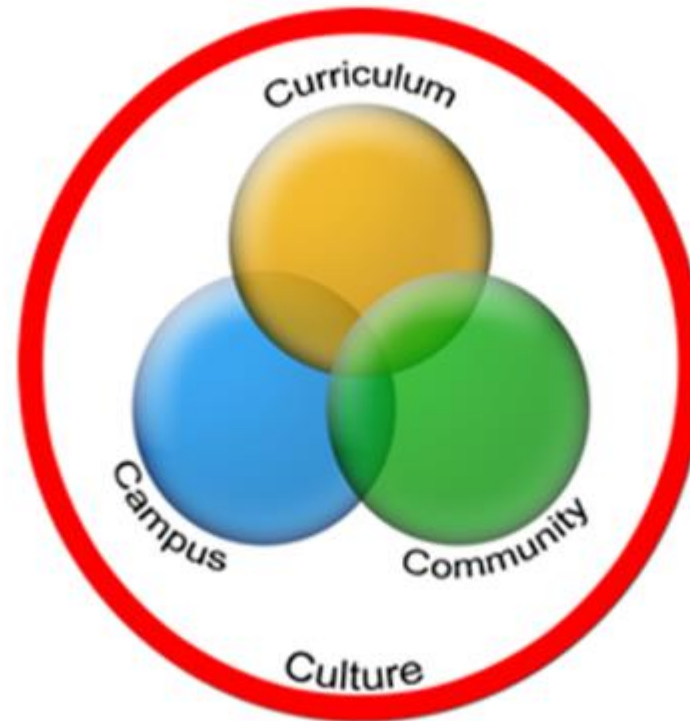
- International and UK policy and strategy frameworks
- Open education resources
- Perspectives on ESD and higher education experience
- ESD curriculum design tools, frameworks and models





# Universities as learning institutions

The 'C' model at Plymouth University



Contemplation Point – How do we advance this transformative approach to education in an integrated 'joined up' way – what are the implications for the strategic visioning of this University?

# Moving away from the lone hero model of sustainable leadership



Image: Oliver Raymond Barker SEI Creative Associate University of Plymouth

Contemplation Point – If we all have valuable expertise and talents to contribute, but none of us can perhaps claim to be a ‘sustainability expert’, how can we take ESD forwards together?