

Institutional Characteristics (IC)

Institutional characteristics include data related to an institution's boundary (defining the campus for purposes of reporting), its operational characteristics (the context in which it operates) and its demographics and academic structure. This information provides valuable context for understanding and interpreting STARS data. The category also provides the opportunity for an institution to highlight points of distinction and upload an executive letter to accompany its STARS report.

Some of the values reported in IC-2 and IC-3 are also required to pursue specific STARS credits. Such reporting fields may be populated from the data provided in the Institutional Characteristics section of the online Reporting Tool.

IC 1	Institutional Boundary	Required
IC 2	Operational Characteristics	Required
IC 3	Academics and Demographics	Required
IC 4	Points of Distinction	Optional
IC 5	Executive Letter	Required *

* Not applicable to every institution.

IC 1: Institutional Boundary

Required for submission

Each institution is expected to include its entire main campus when collecting data. Institutions may choose to include any other land holdings, facilities, farms, and satellite campuses, as long as the selected boundary is the same for each credit. If an institution finds it necessary to exclude a particular unit from its submission, the reason for excluding it must be provided in the appropriate reporting field, below.

Reporting Fields

Required

- Institution type* (Associate/Short-cycle, Baccalaureate, Doctoral/Research, Master's, Other)
- Institutional control (Public, Private for-profit, or Private non-profit)
- A brief description of the institution's main campus and other aspects of the institutional boundary used to complete this report
- Which of the following features are present on campus and which are included within the institutional boundary?
 - Agricultural school
 - Medical school
 - Other professional school(s) with labs and clinics (e.g., dental, nursing, pharmacy, public health, veterinary)
 - Museum
 - Satellite campus
 - Hospital
 - Farm larger than 2 hectares (5 acres)
 - Agricultural experiment station larger than 2 hectares (5 acres)

If there are features present that are not included within the boundary, provide:

- The rationale for excluding any features that are present from the institutional boundary

Optional

- Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- Contact information for a responsible party (an employee who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

Standards and Terms

Institution type

Each institution is classified into one of five basic types based on the general level of educational programs offered and number and type of degrees awarded. An institution may be classified as one type and still offer programs and award degrees at various levels, as described below. An institution in the U.S.

must report its [Basic Carnegie Classification \(search by institution name\)](#), with the exception of Special Focus and Tribal institutions, which must select the most appropriate of the five types listed.

Type	Description	Corresponding UNESCO Level
Associate/ Short-cycle	Includes tertiary institutions where all degrees, certificates, and/or diplomas are between secondary education and baccalaureate degree level (e.g., associate degrees), or where baccalaureate degrees account for less than 10 percent of all undergraduate degrees. This may include community colleges, further education colleges, (higher) technical colleges, technician or advanced/higher vocational training, and similar institutions.	ISCED 5
Baccalaureate	Includes tertiary institutions where baccalaureate degrees represent at least 10 percent of all undergraduate degrees and where fewer than 50 master's degrees or 20 doctoral degrees are awarded annually. (May include some institutions above the master's degree threshold.)	ISCED 6
Master's	Generally includes tertiary institutions that award at least 50 master's degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees annually.	ISCED 7
Doctoral/Research	Includes tertiary institutions that award at least 20 research doctoral degrees annually (which may include doctoral-level degrees that qualify recipients for entry into professional practice, such as the JD, MD, PharmD, DPT, etc).	ISCED 8
Other (non-higher ed.)	Includes secondary schools and other non-tertiary institutions. This may include college preparatory schools, primary professional and technical education designed for direct entry into the labor force, and adult education institutions primarily focused on social, recreational, or self-development goals.	ISCED 2-4 and other entities

An institution should report the institution type that is most appropriate given its context and with consideration for the criteria outlined above. For example, a U.S. Carnegie-classified Special Focus institution or Tribal College should select the institution type that best reflects the level of programs offered and the number and type of degrees awarded.

IC 2: Operational Characteristics

Required for submission

Operational characteristics are variables that provide information about the context in which the institution operates. Report the most recent data available within the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission.

Reporting Fields

Required

- Endowment size* (US/Canadian dollars)
- Total campus area (i.e., the total amount of land within the institutional boundary) (hectares or acres)
- Locale* (Large city, Urban fringe of large city, Mid-size city, Urban fringe of mid-size city, Large town, Small town, or Rural)
- IECC climate zone* (1 - Very Hot; 2 – Hot; 3- Warm; 4 – Mixed; 5 – Cool; 6 – Cold; 7 - Very Cold; 8 - Subarctic)
- Gross floor area of building space* (gross square metres or feet)
- Floor area of *laboratory space* (square metres or feet)
- Floor area of *healthcare space* (square metres or feet)
- Floor area of other *energy intensive space*, e.g., data centers, food production space, convenience stores (square metres or feet)

Optional

- Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- Contact information for a responsible party (an employee who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

Standards and Terms

Endowment

Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education, endowment funds are defined as “funds whose principal is nonexpendable (true endowment) and that are intended to be invested to provide earnings for institutional use. Also includes term endowments and funds functioning as endowment.”

Energy intensive space

Energy intensive space includes “laboratory space”, “healthcare space”, and “other energy intensive space”. “Other energy intensive space” is reported separately from laboratory space and healthcare space and may include data centers, food production space, convenience stores, and other facilities that the institution has determined to have an average energy use intensity (EUI) that is at least twice that of office/administrative space. (Energy use intensity is a unit of measurement that represents the energy consumed by a building relative to its size, e.g., 1,000 MMBtu per square metre). For more information,

see [ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager Technical Reference: U.S. Energy Use Intensity by Property Type](#).

Gross floor area of building space

Gross floor area of building space refers to the total amount of building space that is included within the institutional boundary. Any standard definition of building space may be used (e.g. ASHRAE, ANSI/BOMA, IECC) as long as it is used consistently. Parking structures are included. For guidance on calculating gross square footage of a building, you may also consult [3.2.1 Gross Area](#) of the U.S. Department of Education's [Postsecondary Education Facilities Inventory and Classification Manual](#).

Buildings within the overall STARS boundary that the institution leases entirely (i.e. the institution is the only tenant) should be included.

Buildings that are not owned by the institution and in which the institution is one of multiple tenants may be excluded. If the institution chooses to include such buildings, it must include all multi-tenant buildings that are included in the institution's overall STARS boundary and in which the institution is a tenant; institutions cannot choose to include some leased spaces and omit others. If an institution chooses to include leased spaces, the institution should count only the square footage of building space it occupies and not the entire building.

Healthcare space

The total amount of building space within the institutional boundary that may be categorized as "Health Care Facilities" (e.g., codes in the 800 series under the [Space Use Codes](#) in the U.S. Department of Education's [Postsecondary Education Facilities Inventory and Classification Manual](#)). To simplify reporting, an institutions with a hospital may report all floor area within the hospital as healthcare space.

IECC climate zone

Climate zones are consistent with the climate designations used by the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). The zones correspond to these generalized climate categories:

1 - Very Hot; 2 – Hot; 3 – Warm; 4 – Mixed; 5 – Cool; 6 – Cold; 7 - Very Cold; 8 - Subarctic

For further guidance, see [ANSI/ASHRAE/IESNA Standard 90.1-2007](#) (international) or [IECC/ASHRAE Climate Zones](#) (U.S).

Laboratory space

The total amount of building space within the institutional boundary that may be categorized as "research laboratories" (e.g., code 250 under the [Space Use Codes](#) in the US Department of Education's [Postsecondary Education Facilities Inventory and Classification Manual](#)). To simplify reporting, an institution may report all floor area within buildings that contain research laboratories as laboratory space.

Locale

The locale or setting of institution's main campus may be classified as one of the following:

- Large City: A central city of a consolidated metropolitan statistical area (CMSA) or metropolitan statistical area (MSA), with the city having a population greater than or equal to 250,000.
- Mid-size City: A central city of a CMSA or MSA, with the city having a population less than 250,000.

- Urban Fringe of a Large City: Any territory within a CMSA or MSA of a Large City and defined as urban by a national census bureau or the equivalent.
- Urban Fringe of a Mid-size City: Any territory within a CMSA or MSA of a Mid-size City and defined as urban by a national census bureau or the equivalent.
- Large Town: An incorporated place or census-designated place with a population greater than or equal to 25,000 and located outside a CMSA or MSA.
- Small Town: An incorporated place or census-designated place with a population less than 25,000 and greater than or equal to 2,500 and located outside a CMSA or MSA.
- Rural: Any territory designated as rural by a national census bureau or the equivalent.

IC 3: Academics and Demographics

Required for submission

This section includes variables that provide information about the institution's academic programs, students, and employees. Report the most recent data available within the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission. Some population figures are used to calculate *weighted campus user*, a measurement of an institution's population that is adjusted to accommodate how intensively certain community members use the campus.

Reporting Fields

Required

- Number of *academic divisions* (e.g., colleges, schools)
- Number of *academic departments* (or the equivalent)

Headcounts

Report the unduplicated total number of students enrolled and workers employed over a 12-month period (e.g., as reported on the U.S. [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#) 12-Month Enrollment and Human Resources forms) or else representative *headcounts* (e.g., autumn figures).

- Number of *students enrolled for credit*
- Total number of *employees* (academic + non-academic staff)

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)

Report the institution's best estimates, annualized as feasible and/or calculated according to relevant national, regional or international standards (e.g., as reported on the U.S. IPEDS 12-Month Enrollment form or calculated using the IPEDS formulas). *Non-credit students* may be included.

- Total *full-time equivalent* student enrollment (undergraduate and graduate)
- Full-time equivalent of students enrolled exclusively in *distance education*
(If not regularly tracked, an institution may estimate FTE attributable to distance education, e.g., by multiplying the percentage of students that are enrolled exclusively in distance education by total FTE enrollment.)
- Full-time equivalent of employees (academic + non-academic staff)

On-Campus Residents

Report annualized headcounts as feasible or else representative snapshots (e.g., autumn headcounts).

- Number of students *resident on-site*
- Number of employees resident on-site
- Number of other individuals resident on-site, e.g., family members of employees, individuals lodging on-site (by average occupancy rate), and/or *staffed hospital beds* (if applicable)

Optional

- Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)

- Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- Contact information for a responsible party (an employee who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

Standards and Terms

Academic departments

An academic department is an administrative division of a college, university, or school faculty that is devoted to a particular academic discipline (e.g., Economics, Environmental Science, Sociology) or a closely related set of disciplines (e.g., Asian Studies or Physics & Astronomy). Departments may exist under other nomenclature and with coarser or finer divisions, depending upon each institution's context. Fields of study, programs, subject areas or the equivalent may be considered to be "departments" in the absence of traditional administrative divisions.

Academic divisions

An academic division is an administrative division of a college, university, or school faculty that is devoted to a subset of students (e.g., Undergraduate School) or a particular academic degree program or discipline (e.g., School of Architecture). Divisions may exist under other nomenclature and with coarser or finer divisions, depending upon each institution's context.

Annualized

An annualized population figure is the average of all periods (e.g., quarters, semesters, months) during an academic or calendar year (e.g., adding fall, winter, spring and summer enrollment figures and dividing by 4).

Consistent with the U.S. IPEDS, an institution may calculate and report annual FTE student enrollment based on instructional activity (i.e., the credit and/or contact hours reported by the institution over a 12 month period) rather than annualized counts.

Likewise, an institution may calculate and report annual FTE employees based on level of service rather than annualized counts. For example, an institution may define one "annualized FTE" as 12 months of service at 100 percent time. When an appointment is less than 12 months service or less than 100 percent time, the annualized FTE would be reduced proportionately. See also "Full-time equivalent".

Distance education

Consistent with U.S. IPEDS, distance education is education that "uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously".

A distance education course is one in which "the instructional content is delivered exclusively via distance education. Requirements for coming to campus for orientation, testing, or academic support services do not exclude a course from being classified as distance education."

A distance education program is one for which "all the required coursework for program completion is able to be completed via distance education courses". Distance education students are students who are enrolled in distance education programs, or else exclusively in distance education courses.

Employees

Employees are defined as personnel paid by the institution and include full-time and part-time workers (as defined by the institution), and both academic staff (i.e., “faculty members”) and non-academic staff.

Full-time equivalent

Consistent with [Eurostat](#), full-time equivalent (FTE) is defined as follows:

A full-time equivalent, sometimes abbreviated as FTE, is a unit to measure employed persons or students in a way that makes them comparable although they may work or study a different number of hours per week.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) further elaborates in regard to [FTE students](#):

A full-time equivalent (FTE) measure attempts to standardize a student’s actual course load against the normal course load. Calculating the full-time/part-time status requires information on the time periods for actual and normal course loads. For the reduction of headcount data to FTEs, where data and norms on individual participation are available, course load is measured as the product of the fraction of the normal course load for a full-time student and the fraction of the school/academic year.

[FTE = (actual course load/normal course load) * (actual duration of study during reference period/normal duration of study during reference period).]

When actual course load information is not available, a full-time student is considered equal to one FTE. An institution should report its best estimates for FTE figures, annualized as feasible and calculated according to relevant national, regional or international standards (e.g., as calculated or reported on the U.S. IPEDS 12-Month Enrollment form and using the [IPEDS formulas](#)).

Headcount

Consistent with the [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#), headcount is defined as:

The number of individuals [...] counted, regardless of the intensity of participation/length of their program. In other words, a headcount measures the total number of students or employees, irrespective of course-load or employment status.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

The [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#) (IPEDS) is a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid programs.

Non-credit students

Non-credit or community education students are students who are enrolled in courses for personal or professional interest and are not seeking a [degree](#) or formal award, for example:

- Students enrolled exclusively in courses that cannot be applied towards a formal award
- Students enrolled exclusively in Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
- Students exclusively auditing classes

Resident on-site

Individuals are resident on-site when they are living in a housing facility within the institutional boundary that is owned or controlled by the institution. To avoid double-counting, count student resident assistants (RAs) as students, even if they are also considered to be employees. The number of staffed hospital beds is used as a proxy for the number of hospital patients resident on-site.

Staffed hospital beds

Consistent with [Practice Greenhealth](#), staffed hospital beds:

...are those in-service and patient-ready for more than half of the days in the reporting period.

Staffed beds does not include beds ordinarily occupied for less than 24 hours, such as those in the emergency department, clinic, labor (birthing) rooms, surgery and recovery rooms and outpatient holding beds.

Students enrolled for credit

Consistent with U.S. IPEDS, students enrolled for credit include all students enrolled in courses or programs that can be applied towards the requirements for a postsecondary degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award, regardless of whether or not they are seeking a degree or certificate. This includes:

- Students enrolled for credit in off-campus centers
- High school students taking regular college courses for credit
- Students taking remedial courses if the student is degree-seeking for the purpose of student financial aid determination
- Students from overseas enrolled in U.S. courses for credit (e.g., online students)
- Graduate students enrolled for thesis credits, even when zero credits are awarded as these students are still enrolled and seeking their degree.

Weighted campus user

Weighted campus user is a measurement of an institution's population that is adjusted to accommodate how intensively certain community members use the campus. This figure is used to normalize resource consumption and environmental impact figures in order to accommodate the varied impacts of different population groups. For example, an institution where a high percentage of students live on campus would witness higher greenhouse gas emissions, waste generation, and water consumption figures than otherwise comparable non-residential institution since students' residential impacts and consumption would be included in the institution's totals.

STARS calculates the figure according to the following formula. Please note that users will not have to calculate this figure themselves; the result will be calculated automatically when the data are entered into the online Reporting Tool.

$$\text{Weighted campus users} = (A + B + C) + 0.75 [(D - A) + (E - B) - F]$$

A = Number of students resident on-site

B = Number of employees resident on-site

C = Number of other individuals resident on-site and/or staffed hospital beds

D = Total full-time equivalent student enrollment

E = Full-time equivalent of employees

F = Full-time equivalent of students enrolled exclusively in distance education

IC 4: Points of Distinction

Optional

This optional section provides an opportunity for an institution to highlight up to three programs, initiatives, or accomplishments that best reflect its leadership for sustainability. Completing this section will help inform how AASHE publicizes the institution's STARS rating.

Reporting Fields

Required

- Name of the institution's featured sustainability program, initiative, or accomplishment
- A brief description of the institution's featured program initiative, or accomplishment
- Which of the following impact areas does the featured program, initiative, or accomplishment most closely relate to? (Select up to three.)
 - Curriculum
 - Research
 - Campus Engagement
 - Public Engagement
 - Air & Climate
 - Buildings
 - Energy
 - Food & Dining
 - Grounds
 - Purchasing
 - Transportation
 - Waste
 - Water
 - Coordination & Planning
 - Diversity & Affordability
 - Investment & Finance
 - Wellbeing & Work

Optional

- Website URL where more information about the institution's featured program, initiative, or accomplishment may be found
- STARS credit in which the featured program, initiative, or accomplishment is reported (if applicable)
- A photograph or document associated with the featured program, initiative, or accomplishment (upload)
- Name of a second highlighted program/initiative/accomplishment
- A brief description of the second program/initiative/accomplishment
- Which impact areas does the second program/initiative/accomplishment most closely relate to?
- Website URL where more information about the second program/initiative/accomplishment may be found
- STARS credit in which the second program/initiative/accomplishment is reported (if applicable)
- A photograph or document associated with the second program/initiative/accomplishment (upload)

- Name of a third highlighted program/initiative/accomplishment
- A brief description of the third program/initiative/accomplishment
- Which impact areas does the third program/initiative/accomplishment most closely relate to?
- The website URL where more information about the third program/initiative/accomplishment may be found
- A photograph or document associated with the third program/initiative/accomplishment (upload)
- Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- Contact information for a responsible party (an employee who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

IC 5: Executive Letter

Required to submit a scored report; optional for unscored reports

This section allows an institution to upload a letter from the institution's president, chancellor, or other high ranking executive. Typically written on official letterhead, the executive letter serves as an introduction or cover letter for the institution's STARS report. As such, the letter may include a description of the institution's commitment to sustainability, background about the institution, key achievements or highlights from the report, and/or goals for future submissions. The letter also serves as indicator of administrative support for sustainability and the STARS process. Institutions are expected to submit a new executive letter when there has been a change in leadership or the institution is submitting for a higher rating.

Reporting Fields

Required

- Executive letter (upload)

AC 1: Academic Courses

14 points available

Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that offer sustainability course content across the curriculum. Sustainability courses can provide valuable grounding in the concepts and principles of sustainability, help build knowledge about a component of sustainability, or introduce students to sustainability concepts. Institutions that integrate sustainability concepts throughout the curriculum prepare students to apply sustainability principles in their professional fields. Having sustainability courses and content offered by numerous departments helps ensure that the institution's approach to sustainability education is comprehensive and includes diverse topics. This will help students develop a broad understanding of the field. Likewise, offering sustainability course content in numerous departments can increase student exposure to sustainability topics and themes.

Conducting an inventory of academic offerings provides an important foundation for advancing sustainability curriculum. It provides a baseline for understanding current offerings and can help institutions identify strengths and opportunities for growth. In addition, a list and description of sustainability-focused courses and other courses that are inclusive of sustainability helps current and prospective students find and understand sustainability course offerings, which can assist them in organizing their academic studies.

Applicability

This credit applies to all institutions that have students enrolled for credit.

Criteria

Part 1. Sustainability course offerings

Institution offers sustainability course content as measured by the percentage of academic courses offered that are *sustainability-focused* or *sustainability-inclusive* (see Standards and Terms).

Part 2. Sustainability course offerings by department

Institution offers sustainability course content as measured by the percentage of *academic departments* (or the equivalent) with *sustainability course offerings*.

Required documentation

Institution must provide an inventory conducted during the previous three years to identify its sustainability course offerings and describe for current and prospective students how each course addresses sustainability. For each course, the inventory must include:

- The title, department (or equivalent), and level of the course (e.g., undergraduate or graduate).
- A brief course description or rationale explaining why the course is included that references sustainability, the interdependence of ecological and social/economic systems, or a sustainability challenge.

- An indication of whether the course qualifies as sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive (or equivalent terminology).

A course may be sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive; no course should be identified as both. Courses for which partial or incomplete information is provided may not be counted toward earning points for this credit. This credit does not include continuing education and extension courses, which are covered by the Continuing Education credit in Public Engagement.

An institution that has developed a more refined approach to course classification may use that approach as long as it is consistent with the definitions and guidance provided.

Scoring

An institution must identify and describe its sustainability course offerings per the minimum criteria outlined in Measurement to earn points for this credit. Each part is scored independently.

Part 1

An institution earns the maximum of 8 points for Part 1 of this credit if 20 percent or more of all courses offered are sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive. Incremental points are awarded based on the percentage of course offerings that meet the criteria. For example, an institution where 4 percent of all courses offered are sustainability-focused and 6 percent are sustainability-inclusive would earn 4 points (half of the points available for Part 1 of this credit).

Points for Part 1 of this credit are calculated automatically in the STARS Reporting Tool as follows:

Course type	Factor		Number of courses offered of each type		Total number of courses offered by the institution		Points earned
Sustainability-focused	40	x	_____	÷	_____	=	
Sustainability-inclusive	40		_____				
Total points earned →							Up to 8

Part 2

An institution earns the maximum of 6 points for Part 2 of this credit when 90 percent or more of academic departments offer at least one sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive course. Incremental points are available based on the percentage of academic departments that have sustainability course offerings. For example, if 45 percent of the departments at an institution offered one or more sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive courses, that institution would earn 3 points (half of the points available for Part 2 of this credit).

Points for Part 2 of this credit are calculated automatically in the STARS Reporting Tool as follows:

Factor		Number of departments with sustainability course offerings		Total number of departments		Points earned
6.67	×	_____	÷	_____	=	Up to 6

Reporting Fields

Required

- Total number of *undergraduate courses* offered by the institution
 - Number of undergraduate courses offered that are *sustainability-focused*
 - Number of undergraduate courses offered that are *sustainability-inclusive*
 - Total number of *graduate courses* offered by the institution
 - Number of graduate courses offered that are sustainability-focused
 - Number of graduate courses offered that are sustainability-inclusive
 - Total number of academic departments that offer courses (at any level)
 - Number of academic departments with sustainability course offerings
 - A copy of the institution's inventory of its sustainability course offerings and descriptions (upload)
 - Do the figures reported above cover one, two, or three academic years?
 - A brief description of the methodology used to complete the course inventory (i.e., how the total number of courses offered was determined and how sustainability course offerings were identified, including the definitions used and the process for reviewing and/or validating the course inventory)
 - How were courses with multiple offerings or sections counted for the figures reported above?
 - Each offering or section of a course was counted as an individual course
 - Each course was counted as a single course regardless of the number of offerings or sections
 - Not applicable; no courses with multiple offerings or sections were included
 - Other (Please describe below)
- If Other, provide:
- A brief description of how courses with multiple offerings or sections were counted

Optional

- Website URL where information about the programs or initiatives is available
- Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- Contact information for a responsible party (an employee who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

Measurement

Timeframe

Report the most data available from within the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission.

Institutions may choose to inventory and report course offerings from one, two, or three academic years, as long as both the total number of courses offered and the number of sustainability course offerings are measured during the same period.

Sampling and Data Standards

Part 1

Each institution is free to choose a methodology to identify sustainability course offerings that is most appropriate given its unique circumstances. Asking faculty and departments to self-identify courses that are sustainability-focused and sustainability-inclusive using the definitions outlined in *Standards and Terms* or looking at the stated learning outcomes and course objectives associated with each course may provide a richer view of sustainability course offerings than simply reviewing course descriptions, but it is not required.

To best reflect the number of opportunities students have to learn about sustainability, it is recommended that institutions count each time a course is offered as a separate course (e.g., a course with two sections taught in the fall term and two sections taught during spring term would count as four courses). To streamline the data gathering process, however, institutions may elect to count a course with multiple offerings as a single course as long as sustainability course offerings are counted in the same way as total course offerings. For example, a course that is held twice (or if there are two sections) in the fall term and once in the spring term may be counted as 3 courses or 1 course, as long as the institution's course counting methodology is consistent. An institution that elects not to count each time a course is offered as a separate course should verify that 50 percent or more of the sections or offerings of a course are sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive.

Likewise, an institution may choose whether or not to count courses listed in multiple departments or academic divisions as separate courses. For example, a course that is cross-listed in two departments or that is listed as both an undergraduate and a graduate course may be counted as one or two courses, as long as the institution's methodology is consistent.

The following course types may be excluded at the institution's discretion, as long as they are excluded from both the count of sustainability course offerings and the count of total courses:

- Individually-directed courses (e.g., thesis, independent study, practicum)
- Courses of four or fewer students
- Special topics courses (e.g., courses that address emerging issues or specialized content and that are not offered on an ongoing basis)
- Required courses for which the content is dictated by external bodies or legislation and not under institutional control (e.g., legally mandated courses on research ethics)
- Courses that are strictly practice-oriented, e.g.:
 - Medical courses dedicated to clinical practice.
 - Arts courses dedicated to performance, technique, or composition.
 - Physical education courses that are activity-based.
 - Trades courses dedicated to hands-on learning or practice.

Any exclusions must be documented in the public "Data source(s) and notes about the submission" field.

Courses must have been taught during the specified timeframe of one, two or three academic years to count (e.g., as opposed to being listed in a course catalog, but not taught).

Courses offered by outside entities (e.g., courses offered by other colleges that are part of a consortium with the institution or courses offered through study abroad programs that are not administered by the institution) should not be counted in the reporting institution's course inventory. However, courses developed and offered jointly by multiple institutions that are listed in the reporting institution's course catalog may be counted. In such circumstances, courses should be counted consistently. This means that if sustainability courses offered jointly by the participating institution and another entity are included in the inventory, jointly offered courses without sustainability content should be included as well.

Part 2

Each department with one or more sustainability course offerings may be counted toward Part 2 of this credit, even if the courses are offered or administered jointly with other departments. Courses that are offered independently of any department are not considered in Part 2.

An institution may exclude departments that exclusively offer practice-oriented courses (see above), as long as they are excluded from both the count of departments with sustainability course offerings and the count of total academic departments. Any exclusions must be documented in the public "Data source(s) and notes about the submission" field.

Standards and Terms

Academic departments

An academic department is an administrative division of a college, university, or school faculty that is devoted to a particular academic discipline (e.g., Economics, Environmental Science, Sociology) or a closely related set of disciplines (e.g., Asian Studies or Physics & Astronomy). Departments may exist under other nomenclature and with coarser or finer divisions, depending upon each institution's context. Fields of study, programs, subject areas or the equivalent may be considered to be "departments" in the absence of traditional administrative divisions.

Graduate courses

Graduate courses are offered as part of the spectrum of education beyond the level of a baccalaureate, i.e. for students who hold bachelor's degrees or above and are taking courses at the graduate level.

Sustainability challenges

AASHE defines sustainability in a pluralistic and inclusive way, encompassing human and ecological health, social justice, secure livelihoods, and a better world for all generations. Major sustainability challenges include (but are not limited to) climate change, global poverty and inequality, natural resource depletion, and environmental degradation. To identify additional sustainability challenges, it may be helpful to reference the principles outlined in the [Earth Charter](#) and/or the targets embedded in the UN [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

Sustainability course offerings

Sustainability course offerings include A) sustainability-focused courses and B) sustainability-inclusive courses:

A. Sustainability-focused courses (a.k.a. "sustainability courses")

To count as sustainability-focused, the course title or description must indicate a primary and explicit focus on sustainability. This includes:

- Foundational courses with a primary and explicit focus on sustainability (e.g., Introduction to Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Sustainability Science).
- Courses with a primary and explicit focus on the application of sustainability within a field (e.g., Architecture for Sustainability, Green Chemistry, Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Business). As sustainability is an interdisciplinary topic, such courses generally incorporate insights from multiple disciplines.
- Courses with a primary and explicit focus on a major sustainability challenge (e.g., Climate Change Science, Environmental Justice, Global Poverty and Development, Renewable Energy Policy). The focus of such courses might be on providing knowledge and understanding of the problems and/or the tools for solving them.

The course title or description does not have to use the term “sustainability” to count as sustainability-focused if the primary and explicit focus of the course is on the interdependence of ecological and social/economic systems or a major sustainability challenge. If the course title and description do not unequivocally indicate such a focus, but it is evident from the course description or syllabus that the course incorporates sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts in a prominent way, the course may qualify as sustainability-inclusive (see below).

B. Sustainability-inclusive courses (a.k.a. “sustainability-related courses”)

Courses that are not explicitly focused on sustainability may contribute towards scoring if sustainability has clearly been incorporated into course content. To count as sustainability-inclusive, the course description or rationale provided in the course inventory must indicate that the course incorporates a unit or module on sustainability or a sustainability challenge, includes one or more sustainability-focused activities, or integrates sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts throughout the course.

While a foundational course such as chemistry or sociology might provide knowledge that is useful to practitioners of sustainability, it would not be considered “sustainability-inclusive” unless the concept of sustainability or sustainability challenges and issues are specifically integrated into the course. Likewise, although specific tools or practices such as GIS (Geographic Information Systems) or engineering can be applied towards sustainability, such courses would not count unless the description or rationale provided in the inventory clearly indicates that sustainability is integrated into the course.

Undergraduate courses

Undergraduate courses are included in courses of study leading up to the level of a baccalaureate, i.e., 4 or 5-year bachelor's degree programs, associate's degree programs, or vocational or technical programs below the baccalaureate.

Scoring Example: Academic Courses

Part 1

Example College offered 1,000 courses during the past year. Of those courses, 10 were sustainability-focused and 65 were sustainability-inclusive.

Course type	Factor		Number of courses offered of each type		Total number of courses offered by the institution		Points earned
Sustainability-focused	40	×	<u>10</u>	÷	<u>1,000</u>	=	0.4
Sustainability-inclusive	40		<u>65</u>				2.6
Total points earned →							3.0

Part 2

Example College has 30 academic departments. Of those, 10 offer at least one sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive course.

Factor		Number of departments with sustainability course offerings		Total number of departments		Points earned
$6\frac{2}{3}$	×	<u>10</u>	÷	<u>30</u>	=	2.22

Credit Example: Identifying Sustainability Course Offerings

Sustainability-focused	Sustainability-inclusive	Insufficient evidence to qualify as a sustainability course offering
<p>Introduction to Sustainable Energy This course assesses current and potential future energy systems, with emphasis on meeting regional and global energy needs in the 21st century in a sustainable manner. We will examine various renewable and conventional energy production technologies, energy end-use practices and alternatives, and consumption practices in different countries. Students will learn to evaluate energy technology system proposals in the context of environmental, engineering, political, social, and economic goals.</p> <p><i>The course title and description indicate a primary and explicit focus on the application of sustainability within a field and a major sustainability challenge (sustainable energy production).</i></p>	<p>Energy Infrastructure An overview of production methods for electric power, thermal energy and cooling. The course includes a unit on the environmental consequences of different technologies.</p> <p>Photovoltaic and Wind Turbine Installation The course will discuss the fundamentals of photovoltaic and wind power generation, installation and maintenance practices.</p> <p><i>The primary and explicit focus of each of these courses is on a topic other than sustainability, but sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts are clearly incorporated into course content.</i></p>	<p>Energy Systems Explores energy systems as infrastructure critical to national and global economies and provides an overview of energy resources, production, and delivery.</p> <p><i>Although the course provides knowledge that may be useful to sustainability practitioners, the description does not indicate that the sustainability challenges associated with energy production are addressed.</i></p> <p><i>If a rationale was provided that indicated the presence of a sustainability-focused unit, module, or activity, the course could be counted as sustainability-inclusive/related.</i></p>
<p>Conservation Biology The focus of this course is on the science of conservation biology in the context of environmental policy, socioeconomic demands, and environmental ethics. Topics will include population biology, extinction, wildlife management, the role of science in making environmental policy, wetlands conservation, sustainable agriculture and forestry, integrated land-use management, and vegetation analysis.</p> <p><i>Although the course is not focused on the concept of sustainability, the description indicates a primary and explicit focus on the interdependence of ecological and social/economic systems.</i></p>	<p>Population Biology Introduction to basic theoretical tools to study the evolutionary and ecological dynamics of populations. Topics include ecology of individuals, population growth models, structured populations, life history strategies, stochastic populations, basic population genetics theory, deleterious alleles in natural populations, and molecular population genetics.</p> <p><i>The primary and explicit focus of the course is on a topic other than sustainability, but sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts (e.g., ecological dynamics) are clearly incorporated into course content.</i></p>	<p>Introduction to Biology This introductory course defines biology and its relationship to other sciences. We examine the overarching theories of life from biological research and also explore the fundamental concepts and principles of the study of living organisms and their interaction with the environment.</p> <p><i>Although the course provides knowledge that may be useful to sustainability practitioners, the description does not indicate that sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts are integrated into the course.</i></p> <p><i>If a rationale was provided that indicated the presence of a sustainability-focused unit, module, or activity, the course</i></p>

		<i>could be counted as sustainability-inclusive/related.</i>
<p>Environmental Literature This course will introduce students to contemporary environmental literature. All texts in the course focus on the natural world and the human relationships with it. We will discuss such questions and topics as pollution, climate change, the fossil- and post-fossil fuel economies, ethics, environmental activism, and questions of responsibility to the earth.</p> <p><i>Although the course is not focused on the concept of sustainability, the description indicates an explicit focus on the interdependence of ecological and social/economic systems.</i></p>	<p>Modern and Contemporary Nature Writing This course examines varied depictions of the environment in modern and contemporary literary texts from a range of genres. The course will place these in theoretical and historical context, considering the key features of contemporary environmental discourses. Includes units on post-pastoral, post-carbon, apocalyptic and 'the new nature writing', and media reportage of recent environmental issues.</p> <p><i>The primary and explicit focus of the course is on a topic other than sustainability, but sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts (e.g., post-carbon futures) are clearly incorporated into course content.</i></p>	<p>American Renaissance Literature This class investigates how the diverse literary genres of the American Renaissance have been used to construct identity and culture. Required readings include works by Emerson, Melville, Thoreau, and Whitman.</p> <p><i>Although the course provides knowledge that may be useful to sustainability practitioners, the description does not indicate that sustainability challenges, issues and concepts are integrated into the course.</i></p> <p><i>If a rationale was provided that indicated the presence of a sustainability-focused unit, module, or activity, the course could be counted as sustainability-inclusive/related.</i></p>
<p>Sustainable Business This course will provide an overview of the challenges of sustainability, including the expected impacts of climate change, resource constraints on various sectors of the economy (including job creation), and expectations around corporate governance. It will embed the issues of carbon management, sustainable practices, waste reduction, social development and resource management in the larger set of goals encompassed in what is known by the closely related terms of "corporate sustainability" or just "corporate responsibility."</p> <p><i>The course title and description indicate a primary and explicit focus on the application of sustainability within a field.</i></p>	<p>Business Ethics The overall goal of this course is to help the student understand and appreciate the elements of ethics, the importance of ethical decision making, and its effects on themselves, business and society. The course includes a module on "ESG (environmental, social and governance) Criteria" that addresses corporate social and environmental responsibility in a global context.</p> <p><i>The primary and explicit focus of the course is on a topic other than sustainability, but sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts (e.g., social and environmental responsibility) are clearly incorporated into course content.</i></p>	<p>Supply Chain and Procurement Management Students will gain an in-depth understanding of strategic, tactical and operational issues relating to the management of supply chains. You will be equipped with state-of-the-art concepts, methods, techniques and tools to contribute towards the competitiveness of industrial and commercial organizations worldwide.</p> <p><i>Although the course provides knowledge that may be useful to sustainability practitioners (e.g., supply chain management), the description does not indicate that sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts are integrated into the course.</i></p> <p><i>If a rationale was provided that indicated the presence of a sustainability-focused unit, module, or activity, the course could be counted as sustainability-inclusive/related.</i></p>

<p>Environment and Public Health The course will examine the health impacts of environmental degradation and pollution, with a focus on the concept of environmental justice. Students will also investigate how the outputs of healthcare (for example, chemicals and waste) can impact patients, staff and local communities.</p> <p><i>The course title and description indicate a primary and explicit focus on the application of sustainability within a field and the interdependence of ecological and social systems (environmental justice and the relationship between the environment and human health).</i></p>	<p>Community Health This course designed to give students an in-depth understanding of the social determinants of health. The course will provide historical and theoretical perspectives on the problem, provide a critical examination of empirical support for various explanatory pathways, and prepare students to conduct health-related research with disadvantaged communities. Includes readings on the intersection of poverty, environmental issues, and health.</p> <p><i>The primary and explicit focus of the course is on a topic other than sustainability, but sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts are clearly incorporated into course content.</i></p>	<p>Foundations in Medicine I This course provides the grounding in the physician-patient relationship that is central to all of medical practice. It includes medical interviewing, medical ethics, community preceptorships, service learning, preventive medicine, human behavior and the healthcare system as well as other topics and issues important for contemporary medicine.</p> <p><i>Although the course provides knowledge that may be useful to sustainability practitioners (e.g., ethics and service learning), the description does not indicate that sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts are integrated into the course.</i></p> <p><i>If a rationale was provided that indicated the presence of a sustainability-focused unit, module, or activity, the course could be counted as sustainability-inclusive/related.</i></p>
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AC 2: Learning Outcomes

8 points available

Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions with sustainability learning outcomes associated with program degrees and/or courses of study. Learning outcomes help students develop specific sustainability knowledge and skills and provide institutions and accrediting bodies with standards against which to assess student learning.

Applicability

This credit applies to all institutions that have degree programs.

Criteria

Part 1. Institutional sustainability learning outcomes

Institution has adopted one or more sustainability *learning outcomes* that apply to the entire student body (e.g., general education requirements covering all students) or, at minimum, to the institution's *predominant student body* (e.g., learning outcomes that cover all undergraduate students).

The learning outcome(s) may be explicitly *focused on sustainability* or *supportive of sustainability* (see Standards and Terms). Mission, vision, and values statements do not qualify.

Part 2. Program-level sustainability learning outcomes

Institution's students graduate from degree programs that require an understanding of the concept of sustainability, i.e., programs that:

- Have been identified as sustainability-focused programs in the Undergraduate Program or Graduate Program credit,
- Have adopted one or more *sustainability-focused learning outcomes* (i.e., student learning outcomes that explicitly focus on the concept of sustainability or the interdependence of ecological systems and social/economic systems), OR
- Require successful completion of a sustainability-focused course as identified in the Academic Courses credit.

This credit includes graduate as well as undergraduate programs. Degree programs include majors, minors, concentrations, certificates, and other academic designations. Extension certificates and other certificates that are not part of academic degree programs do not count for this credit; they are covered in the Continuing Education credit in Public Engagement. Programs that include co-curricular aspects may count as long as there is an academic component to the program.

Scoring

Part 1 and Part 2 of this credit are scored together. An institution earns the maximum of 8 points available for this credit when:

- It has adopted one or more sustainability-focused learning outcomes that apply to the entire (or predominant) student body (Part 1) AND at least 25 percent of students graduate from degree programs that require an understanding of sustainability (Part 2);
- It has adopted learning outcomes that are supportive of sustainability and apply to the entire (or predominant) student body (Part 1) AND at least 75 percent of students graduate from degree programs that require an understanding of sustainability (Part 2); OR
- All students graduate from degree programs that require an understanding of sustainability (Part 2).

Each part is scored as follows:

Part 1

Institutions earn the maximum of 6 points available for Part 1 of this credit for having adopted one or more sustainability-focused learning outcomes that apply to the entire (or predominant) student body. Partial points are available. An institution that has adopted learning outcomes that are supportive of sustainability, but not explicitly focused on sustainability, earn 2 points (one-third of the points available in Part 1).

Part 2

Institutions earn the maximum of 8 points available for this credit when all students graduate from degree programs that require an understanding of sustainability. Incremental points are available for Part 2 based on the percentage of students who graduate from such programs. For example, if half of all students graduate from programs that have adopted sustainability-focused learning outcomes, an institution would earn 4 points (half of the points available).

Points for Part 2 of this credit are calculated automatically in the STARS Reporting Tool as follows:

Factor		Number of graduates from degree programs that require an understanding of sustainability		Total number of graduates		Points earned
8	×	_____	÷	_____	=	Up to 8

Reporting Fields

Required

Part 1

- Has the institution adopted one or more sustainability learning outcomes that apply to the entire student body or, at minimum, to the institution's predominant student body (e.g., all undergraduate students)?

If yes:

- Which of the following best describes the sustainability learning outcomes?
 - Sustainability-focused (explicitly address the concept of sustainability or the interdependence of ecological systems and social/economic systems)

- Sustainability-supportive (include specific intellectual and practical skills that are critical for addressing sustainability challenges)
 - A list of the institution level sustainability learning outcomes

Part 2

- Total number of graduates from degree programs (i.e., majors, minors, concentrations, certificates, and other academic designations)
- Number of graduates from degree programs that require an understanding of the concept of sustainability (i.e., have been identified as a sustainability-focused program, have adopted sustainability-focused learning outcomes, or require a sustainability-focused course)
- A brief description of how the figure above was determined
- Do the figures reported above cover one, two, or three academic years?
- Documentation supporting the figure reported above (e.g., a list of degree programs and their associated sustainability-focused learning outcomes) (text or upload)

Optional

- Website URL where information about the programs or initiatives is available
- Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- Contact information for a responsible party (an employee who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

Measurement

Timeframe

Part 1

Report on sustainability learning outcomes that have been adopted as of the anticipated date of submission.

Part 2

Report the most recent data available within the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission. Institutions may choose to report data from one, two, or three academic years, as long as both the total number of graduates and the number of graduates from programs that have sustainability learning outcomes are measured during the same time period.

Sampling and Data Standards

Not applicable

Standards and Terms

Predominant student body

An institution's predominant student body is defined as the primary academic division (e.g., undergraduate versus graduate) that enrolls the greatest share of the total student population. For example, the predominant student body of an institution with 5,000 undergraduate students, 2,000 graduate students, and 500 post-graduate students would be undergraduate students.

Student learning outcomes

Consistent with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), student learning outcomes are defined as:

Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand, and be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning as well as the specific intellectual and practical skills gained and demonstrated by the successful completion of a unit, course, or programme. Learning outcomes, together with assessment criteria, specify the minimum requirements for the award of credit, while grading is based on attainment above or below the minimum requirements for the award of credit. Learning outcomes are distinct from the aims of learning in that they are concerned with the achievements of the learner rather than with the overall intentions of the teacher.

Thus, sustainability learning outcomes are statements that outline the specific sustainability knowledge and skills that a student is expected to have gained and demonstrated by the successful completion of a unit, course, or program.

Sustainability-focused learning outcomes

Sustainability-focused learning outcomes are student learning outcomes that explicitly address the concept of sustainability. A learning outcome does not necessarily have to include the term “sustainability” to count as sustainability-focused as long as there is an explicit focus on the interdependence of ecological systems and social/economic systems. Specific examples include (but are not limited to):

- Students will be able to define sustainability and identify major sustainability challenges.
- Students will have an understanding of the carrying capacity of ecosystems as related to providing for human needs.
- Students will be able to apply concepts of sustainable development to address sustainability challenges in a global context.
- Students will identify, act on, and evaluate their professional and personal actions with the knowledge and appreciation of interconnections among economic, environmental, and social perspectives.

Sustainability-supportive learning outcomes

Sustainability-supportive learning outcomes are student learning outcomes that include specific intellectual and practical skills (and/or attitudes and values) that are critical for addressing sustainability challenges, but do not explicitly address the concept of sustainability (e.g., systems and holistic thinking, change agent skills, interdisciplinary capacities, social and ethical responsibility). Specific examples include (but are not limited to):

- Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the nature of systems.
- Students will have an understanding of their social responsibility as future professionals and citizens.
- Students will be able to accommodate individual differences in their decisions and actions and be able to negotiate across these differences.
- Students will be able to analyze power, structures of inequality, and social systems that govern individual and communal life.
- Students will be able to recognize the global implications of their actions.

AC 3: Undergraduate Program

3 points available

Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that have formal, undergraduate-level degree programs focused on sustainability. Developing such programs signals an institution's commitment to sustainability. Such programs also provide a path for students to study sustainability topics in depth, which better prepares them to address sustainability challenges. Formal academic programs also provide a home for sustainability scholars within the institution.

Applicability

This credit applies to all institutions that have *undergraduate* majors, academic programs, or the equivalent.

Criteria

Institution offers at least one:

- Sustainability-focused program (*major, degree, or certificate program*) for undergraduate students AND/OR
- Undergraduate-level, sustainability-focused *minor or concentration* (e.g., a concentration on sustainable business within a business major).

To count, a major, degree/certificate program, minor, or concentration must have a primary and explicit focus on the concept of sustainability or the interdependence of ecological systems and social/economic systems.

Extension certificates and other certificates that are not part of academic degree programs do not count for this credit; they are covered in the Continuing Education credit in Public Engagement.

Scoring

An institution earns the maximum of 3 points available for this credit for having at least one sustainability-focused degree program or the equivalent for undergraduate students. Partial points are available. An institution with no sustainability-focused degree program that has at least one sustainability-focused minor, concentration or certificate earns 1.5 points (half of the points available for this credit).

Reporting Fields

Required

- Does the institution offer at least one *sustainability-focused* major, degree, or certificate program for undergraduate students (i.e., an interdisciplinary academic program that has a primary and explicit focus on the concept of sustainability or the interdependence of ecological systems and social/economic systems)?

If yes, provide:

- Name of the sustainability-focused undergraduate degree program
- A brief description of the undergraduate degree program
- Website URL for the undergraduate degree program
- Does the institution offer one or more sustainability-focused minors or concentrations for undergraduate students?
 - If yes, provide:
 - Name of the sustainability-focused undergraduate minor or concentration
 - A brief description of the undergraduate minor or concentration
 - Website URL for the undergraduate minor or concentration

Optional

- For up to two additional sustainability-focused undergraduate degree programs, provide:
 - Name of the sustainability-focused undergraduate degree program
 - A brief description of the undergraduate degree program
 - Website URL for the undergraduate degree program
- The name and website URLs of all other sustainability-focused, undergraduate degree programs
- For up to two additional sustainability-focused undergraduate minors or concentrations, provide:
 - Name of the sustainability-focused undergraduate minor or concentration
 - A brief description of the undergraduate minor or concentration
 - Website URL for the undergraduate minor or concentration
- The name and website URLs of all other sustainability-focused undergraduate minors or concentrations
- Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- Contact information for a responsible party (an employee who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

Measurement

Timeframe

Report on current program status and offerings at the time of submission. Planned degree programs or degree programs that have been canceled are not eligible for this credit.

Sampling and Data Standards

Not applicable

Standards and Terms

Major, degree, or certificate program

An academic program or subject area that a student may formally choose to focus on during her or his studies.

Minor or concentration

An academic subject area that a student may formally choose to have a secondary focus on during her or his studies. A minor or concentration is typically not required, but allows a student to take additional courses in a subject different from, or complementary to, her or his major subject area of focus.

Sustainability-focused program

Sustainability-focused programs are interdisciplinary academic programs that have a primary and explicit focus on the concept of sustainability or the interdependence of ecological systems and social/economic systems. The courses required for the successful completion of the program educate students about how different dimensions of sustainability relate to and support each other in theory and practice. The sustainability focus of such a program should be explicit in the program title or description.

Undergraduate students

Undergraduate students are students enrolled in courses of study leading up to the level of a baccalaureate, i.e., 4- or 5-year bachelor's degree programs, associate's degree programs, or vocational or technical programs below the baccalaureate.

AC 4: Graduate Program

3 points available

Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that have formal, graduate academic degree programs focused on sustainability. Developing such programs signals an institution's commitment to sustainability. Formal academic programs focused on sustainability provide a path for students to study sustainability topics in depth, thus better preparing them to address sustainability challenges. Formal academic programs also provide a home for sustainability scholars within the institution.

Applicability

This credit applies to all institutions that offer at least 25 distinct graduate programs. Institutions that offer fewer than 25 distinct graduate programs have a choice of either pursuing this credit or marking it as Not Applicable.

Criteria

Institution offers at least one:

- *Sustainability-focused program* (major, degree program, or equivalent) for *graduate students* AND/OR
- Graduate-level sustainability-focused minor, concentration, or certificate (e.g., a concentration on sustainable business within an MBA program).

To count, a program, minor, concentration, or certificate must have a primary and explicit focus on the concept of sustainability or the interdependence of ecological systems and social/economic systems.

Extension certificates and other certificates that are not part of academic degree programs do not count for this credit; they are covered in the Continuing Education credit in Public Engagement.

Scoring

An institution earns the maximum of 3 points available for this credit for having at least one sustainability-focused degree program or the equivalent for graduate students. Partial points are available. An institution with no sustainability-focused degree program for graduate students that has at least one graduate-level sustainability-focused minor, concentration or certificate earns 1.5 points (half of the points available for this credit).

Reporting Fields

Required

- Does the institution offer at least one sustainability-focused major, degree program, or the equivalent for graduate students (i.e., an interdisciplinary academic program that concentrates on sustainability as an integrated concept, including its social, economic, and environmental dimensions)?

If yes, provide:

- Name of the sustainability-focused graduate-level degree program
 - A brief description of the graduate-level degree program
 - Website URL for the graduate-level degree program
- Does the institution offer one or more graduate-level sustainability-focused minors, concentrations or certificates?

If yes, provide:

- Name of the graduate-level sustainability-focused minor, concentration or certificate
- A brief description of the graduate-level minor, concentration or certificate
- Website URL for the graduate-level minor, concentration or certificate

Optional

- For up to two additional sustainability-focused graduate-level degree programs, provide:
 - Name of the sustainability-focused graduate-level degree program
 - A brief description of the graduate-level degree program
 - Website URL for the graduate-level degree program
- The name and website URLs of all other sustainability-focused graduate-level degree programs
- For up to two additional graduate-level sustainability-focused minors, concentrations or certificates, provide:
 - Name of the graduate-level sustainability-focused minor, concentration or certificate
 - A brief description of the graduate-level minor, concentration or certificate
 - Website URL for the graduate-level minor, concentration or certificate
- The name and website URLs of all other graduate-level sustainability-focused minors, concentrations and certificates
- Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- Contact information for a responsible party (an employee who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

Measurement

Timeframe

Report on current program status and offerings at the time of submission. Planned degree programs or degree programs that have been canceled do not count for this credit.

Sampling and Data Standards

Not applicable

Standards and Terms

Graduate students

Graduate students are students enrolled in the spectrum of education beyond the level of a baccalaureate, i.e., students who hold bachelor's degrees or above and are taking courses at the post-baccalaureate level.

Sustainability-focused program

Sustainability-focused programs are interdisciplinary academic programs that have a primary and explicit focus on the concept of sustainability or the interdependence of ecological systems and social/economic systems. The courses required for the successful completion of the program educate students about how different dimensions of sustainability relate to and support each other in theory and practice. The sustainability focus of such a program should be explicit in the program title or description.

AC 5: Immersive Experience

2 points available

Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that offer sustainability-focused immersive experience programs. Sustained immersive experiences such as community-based internships and “study abroad” programs give students the opportunity to witness and learn in-depth about sustainability challenges and solutions. These programs provide a memorable way for students to deepen and expand their knowledge of sustainability.

Applicability

This credit applies to all institutions that offer *immersive educational programs*.

Criteria

Institution offers at least one immersive, sustainability-focused educational study program. The program is one week or more in length and may take place off-campus, overseas, or on-campus.

To count, a program must have a primary and explicit focus on the concept of sustainability, the interdependence of ecological and social/economic systems, and/or a major sustainability challenge.

For-credit programs, non-credit programs and programs offered in partnership with outside entities may count for this credit. Programs offered exclusively by outside entities do not count for this credit. See the Credit Example, below, for further guidance.

Scoring

An institution earns 2 points for meeting the criteria outlined above. Partial points are not available for this credit.

Reporting Fields

Required

- Does the institution offer at least one immersive, sustainability-focused educational study program that is one week or more in length?

If yes, provide:

- A brief description of the sustainability-focused immersive program(s) offered by the institution, including how each program addresses sustainability

Optional

- Website URL where information about the institution’s immersive education programs is available
- Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- Data source(s) and notes about the submission

- Contact information for a responsible party (an employee who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

Measurement

Timeframe

Programs offered during the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission are eligible for this credit.

Sampling and Data Standards

Not applicable

Standards and Terms

Immersive educational programs

Consistent with [Ball State University](#), immersive educational programs are learning experiences that are: ...designed to bridge content knowledge, skill of application, societal need, and life-long learning. The citizen of the 21st century needs qualities and competencies not easily developed in a traditional teacher-centered classroom: the ability to work in multidisciplinary teams; an appreciation for an array of cultures; an understanding of diverse and changing societies.

Immersive learning experiences require students to manifest their learning in a tangible outcome that lives on and has utility beyond the duration of the experience itself. Through such transformative experiences students should better understand societal issues in global, local, economic, or environmental contexts.

Immersive learning experiences may exhibit most or all of the following characteristics:

- Engage participants in an active learning process that is student-driven, but guided by a faculty mentor.
- Produce a tangible outcome or product, such as a business plan, policy recommendation, publication, or work of art.
- Involve a team of students, often working on a project that is interdisciplinary in nature.
- Include a community partner(s) and create an impact on the larger community as well as on the student participants.
- Focus on student learning outcomes.
- Help students define a career path or make connections to a profession or industry.

Credit Example: Immersive Experience

Example 1: Eco-village semester

Example Community College offers a semester abroad at one of eight affiliated overseas and domestic eco-villages. These eco-villages are sustainability-themed communities where students engage in sustainability skills and issues relevant to that culture and region. The semester experience includes academic content taught by resident faculty at each eco-village as well as practitioners of sustainable practices. In addition, the semester stresses immersion in the culture of sustainability by interacting and working with the people that live there as well as in surrounding areas to develop solutions to environmental, social and economic problems.

Example 2: Local service semester

Example University offers formal semester-long, full-time internships with three local non-profit organizations that serve to advance sustainability. Each organization has a designated faculty liaison that also serves as a mentor for students involved with a particular sustainability organization. As part of the internships, students must complete a substantial academic writing project. These reflections focus on sustainability learning and are presented to all students that completed academic internships that semester.

AC 6: Sustainability Literacy Assessment

4 points available

Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that are assessing the sustainability literacy of their students. Such an assessment helps institutions evaluate the success of their sustainability education initiatives and develop insight into how these initiatives could be improved.

Applicability

This credit applies to all institutions.

Criteria

Institution conducts an assessment of the *sustainability literacy* of its students. The sustainability literacy assessment focuses on knowledge of sustainability topics and challenges.

Assessments that exclusively address sustainability culture (i.e., values, behaviors, beliefs, and awareness of campus sustainability initiatives) or student engagement in sustainability-related programs and activities are excluded. Cultural assessments and participation by U.S. and Canadian institutions in the Sustainability Education Consortium as part of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) are recognized in the Assessing Sustainability Culture credit in Campus Engagement.

An institution may use a single instrument that addresses sustainability literacy, culture, and/or engagement to meet the criteria for this credit if a substantive portion of the assessment (e.g., at least ten questions or a third of the assessment) focuses on student knowledge of sustainability topics and challenges.

Scoring

An institution earns the maximum of 4 points available for this credit by administering a *pre- and post-assessment* to the entire student body or, at minimum, to the institution's *predominant student body* (e.g., all undergraduate students), directly or by *representative sample*. Partial points are available based on the population assessed and whether or not a pre- and post-assessment is conducted as follows:

Attributes of the sustainability literacy assessment (points awarded)	Points earned
An assessment of sustainability literacy is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administered to the entire student body or, at minimum, to the institution's predominant student body (e.g., all undergraduate students), directly or by representative sample. (2 points) Or <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administered to a subset of students (e.g., students enrolled in a sustainability program) or a sample of students that may not be	_____

representative of the institution's predominant student body (e.g., graduate and not undergraduate students). (1 point)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administered as a pre- and post-assessment to the same cohort of students or to representative samples in both the pre-test and post-test. 	× 2
Total points earned →	Up to 4

Reporting Fields

Required

- Does the institution conduct an assessment of the sustainability literacy of its students (i.e., an assessment focused on student knowledge of sustainability topics and challenges)?
 - If yes:
 - Which of the following best describes the literacy assessment? The assessment is administered to:
 - The entire student body or, at minimum, to the institution's predominant student body (e.g., all undergraduate students), directly or by representative sample.
 - A subset of students (e.g., students enrolled in a sustainability program) or a sample of students that may not be representative of the institution's predominant student body (e.g., graduate and not undergraduate students).
 - Which of the following best describes the structure of the assessment? The assessment is administered as a:
 - Pre- and post-assessment to the same cohort of students or to representative samples in both a pre-test and post-test.
 - Standalone evaluation without a follow-up assessment of the same cohort or representative samples (e.g., a summative or outcome assessment without a pre-test).
 - A copy or sample of the questions included in the sustainability literacy assessment(s) or the website URL where the assessment tool may be found (text or upload)
 - A brief description of how the literacy assessment was developed and/or when it was adopted
 - A brief description of how a representative sample was reached (if applicable) and how the assessment(s) were administered
 - A brief summary of results from the literacy assessment(s), including a description of any measurable changes over time

Optional

- Website URL where information about the programs or initiatives is available
- Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- Contact information for a responsible party (an employee who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

Measurement

Timeframe

Report the most recent data available. Sustainability literacy assessments administered within the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission are eligible for this credit. A structured pre- and post-assessment for which the pre-assessment has been conducted and the post-assessment has been scheduled may count.

Sampling and Data Standards

An institution may choose to measure sustainability literacy by administering a survey to a representative sample of the student population being assessed or by surveying the entire student population being assessed (e.g., by making the assessment mandatory).

In conducting an assessment with a representative sample (e.g., of an entire class or cohort of students), care should be taken so that participation in the assessment is not skewed toward individuals with an interest in sustainability, e.g., by employing appropriate sampling techniques or making the assessment mandatory. Recruiting students during a sustainability event or limiting the assessment to students enrolled in a sustainability course or program, for example, would not result in a representative sample.

An institution may report on a single assessment or on multiple assessments that target different groups (e.g., students taking specific courses).

Standards and Terms

Pre- and Post-Assessment

Consistent with the UCLA Office of Instructional Development, pre- and post-assessment is defined as follows:

Pre- and post-assessments measure student learning by comparing results from tests conducted at the start and end of the course [or program]. This type of assessment identifies progress and/or mastery of desired learning goals among students with diverse educational backgrounds, and assesses the “value-added” by the course [or program].

A valid pre- and post-assessment must be administered to the same cohort of students or representative samples of the student population being assessed in both the pre-test and post-test.

Predominant student body

An institution’s predominant student body is defined as the primary academic division (e.g., undergraduate versus graduate) that enrolls the greatest share of the total student population. For example, the predominant student body of an institution with 5,000 undergraduate students, 2,000 graduate students, and 500 post-graduate students would be undergraduate students.

Representative sample

A representative sample is a subset of a statistical population that accurately reflects the members of the entire population. A representative sample should be an unbiased indication of what the entire population is like. For example, in a student population of 1000 students in which 25 percent of the students are enrolled in a business school, 50 percent are enrolled in humanities programs, and 25 percent are

enrolled in science programs, a representative sample might include 200 students: 50 business students, 100 humanities students, and 50 science students. Likewise, a representative sample of purchases should accurately reflect the institution's total purchases, accounting for seasonal and other variations in product availability and purchasing.

Sustainability literacy

Consistent with [Sulitest](#), sustainability literacy is defined as “knowledge about our shared sustainability challenges as well as ways to create solutions to these challenges”.

Sustainability literacy assessments are designed to assess student understanding of the interconnectedness of social, economic and environmental issues and challenges, and not just knowledge about the environment or environmental problems.

Literacy assessments are predominantly composed of items with “correct” and “incorrect” responses in contrast to assessments of sustainability culture (i.e., values, behaviors, beliefs and awareness) that are predominantly composed of items with no single “correct” response.