

# STARS Innovation & Leadership Catalog

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The credits in this catalog are optional and recognize institutions that are seeking innovative solutions to sustainability challenges and demonstrating sustainability leadership in ways that are not otherwise captured in STARS.

Innovation & Leadership (IN) credits recognize:

- Emerging best practices (e.g., seeking independent assurance of STARS data prior to submission).
- Initiatives and outcomes that are a step beyond what is recognized in a standard credit (e.g., achieving third party certification for a program or exceeding the highest criterion of an existing credit).
- Exemplary initiatives and outcomes that are only relevant to a minority of institution types or regions (e.g., participation in green hospital networks).
- Innovative programs and initiatives that address sustainability challenges and are not covered by an existing credit.

These credits may be claimed in multiple submissions as long as the criteria are being met at the time of submission.

## Scoring

Each Innovation & Leadership credit is worth a maximum of 0.5 bonus points. An institution's overall, percentage-based STARS score is increased by the number of these points it earns. For example, if an institution earned 30 percent of available points in the four main STARS categories, earning 2 Innovation & Leadership points would raise its final overall score to 32.

An institution may claim any combination of Innovation & Leadership credits and may include as many of these credits in its report as desired, however the maximum number of bonus points applied toward scoring is capped at 4.

# Table of IN Credits

The credits in this catalog are listed in alphabetical order. They are presented in the table below by subcategory to provide an alternative way to review them.

AC	Curriculum	Center for Sustainability Across the Curriculum Online Sustainability Course Sustainability Course Designation
	Research	Academy-Industry Connections Laboratory Animal Welfare
EN	Campus Engagement	Network for Student Social Innovation
	Public Engagement	Anchor Institution Network Community Garden Fair Trade Campus Green Athletics Green Event Certification Program Hospital Network Voter Education and Support
OP	Air & Climate	Carbon Mitigation Project Development Nitrogen Footprint
	Buildings	Green Cleaning Certification Green Laboratory Program
	Energy	Energy System Certification
	Food & Dining	Dining Services Certification
	Grounds	Grounds Certification Pest Management Certification
	Purchasing	Spend Analysis
	Transportation	Bicycle Friendly University Fleet Certification
	Waste	Single-Use Plastic Ban Zero Waste Certification
	Water	Natural Wastewater Systems Stormwater Modeling Water Balance
PA	Coordination & Planning	External Reporting Assurance Social Enterprise Stakeholder Engagement Standard

	Diversity & Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campus Pride Index</li> <li>Diversity and Equity Recognition</li> <li>Sanctuary Institution</li> <li>Serving Underrepresented Students</li> <li>Sustainability Office Diversity Program</li> <li>Textbook Affordability</li> <li>Work College</li> </ul>
	Investment & Finance	Sustainability Projects Fund
	Wellbeing & Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food Bank</li> <li>Full-Time Faculty Employment</li> <li>Health and Safety Management Certification</li> <li>Pay Scale Equity</li> <li>Student Living Wage</li> <li>Wellbeing Certification</li> </ul>
--	Any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Innovation A</li> <li>Innovation B</li> <li>Innovation C</li> <li>Innovation D</li> </ul>

# Academy-Industry Connections

0.5 bonus points available

## Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that have formally adopted policies to guide sponsored research on campus and manage potential conflicts of interest. Although potentially helping to advance sustainability, industry-funded research and other commercial relationships can also have negative consequences for an institution and its stakeholders. Formal guidelines governing such relationships help protect the integrity and accessibility of academic research and scholarship, the reputation of the institution, and the public trust.

## Criteria

Institution has published policies or guidelines governing industry-sponsored research that preserve academic freedom, autonomy and integrity, and manage potential conflicts of interest. The policies or guidelines:

- Require that all significant consulting contracts (e.g., those worth \$5,000 or more a year) be reported to a standing committee charged with reviewing and managing individual and institutional conflicts of interest;
- Prohibit faculty, staff, students, postdoctoral fellows, medical residents, and other academic professionals from engaging in industry-led “ghostwriting” or “ghost authorship”;
- Prohibit participation in sponsored research that restricts investigator access to the complete study data or that limits investigators’ ability to verify the accuracy and validity of final reported results; AND/OR
- Ban confidential corporate research (i.e., research that cannot be published).

For more information, see [Recommended Principles to Guide Academy-Industry Relationships](#) (AAUP).

## Scoring

An institution earns 0.5 bonus points when it meets all four criteria listed. Partial points are available. An institution that meets at least two of the criteria earns 0.25 points.

## Reporting Fields

Required

- Does the institution require that all significant consulting contracts (e.g., those worth \$5,000 or more a year) be reported to a standing committee charged with reviewing and managing individual and institutional conflicts of interest?  
If yes, provide:
  - The policy language that requires that all significant consulting contracts be reviewed for conflicts of interest
- Does the institution prohibit faculty, staff, students, postdoctoral fellows, medical residents, and other academic professionals from engaging in industry-led “ghostwriting” or “ghost authorship”?

If yes, provide:

- The policy language that prohibits industry-led “ghostwriting” or “ghost authorship”
- Does the institution prohibit participation in sponsored research that restricts investigator access to the complete study data or that limits investigators’ ability to verify the accuracy and validity of final reported results?

If yes, provide:

- The policy language that prohibits sponsored research that restricts investigator access or verification
- Does the institution ban confidential corporate research (i.e., research that cannot be published)?

If yes, provide:

- The policy language that bans confidential corporate research

### Optional

- Website URL where information about the institution’s policies regarding industry-sponsored research 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)

# Anchor Institution Network

0.5 bonus points available

## Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that participate in external networks to develop and share new strategies for deploying higher education's intellectual and place-based resources to enhance the economic and social wellbeing of the communities they serve.

## Criteria

Institution is participating in the Higher Education Anchor Mission Initiative (a joint project of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities and The Democracy Collaborative) or an equivalent network for *anchor institutions* approved by AASHE.<sup>1</sup>

## Scoring

An institution earns 0.5 bonus points for participating in an external network of anchor institutions. Partial points are not available.

## Reporting Fields

### Required

- A brief description of the institution's participation in an external network of anchor institutions
- Website URL where information about the anchor institution activities or mission is available

### 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

### Anchor institution

Consistent with The Democracy Collaborative, anchor institutions are defined as follows:

Anchor institutions are enterprises such as universities and hospitals that are rooted in their local communities by mission, invested capital, or relationships to customers, employees, and vendors. As place-based entities that control vast economic, human, intellectual, and institutional resources, anchor institutions have the potential to bring crucial, and measurable, benefits to local children, families, and communities... Increasingly, anchor institutions... are embracing the responsibility their economic impact entails and are expanding their public or nonprofit mission to incorporate what we call an "anchor mission"—consciously applying their long-term, place-based economic power, in combination with their human and intellectual resources, to better the long-term welfare of the communities in which they reside.

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<sup>1</sup> Email [stars@aaashe.org](mailto:stars@aaashe.org) to inquire about program equivalence prior to submission.

# Bicycle Friendly University

0.5 bonus points available

## Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that exceed the criteria outlined in the *Support for Sustainable Transportation* credit by achieving third party recognition as a bicycle friendly institution.

## Criteria

Institution is currently recognized by one of the following:

- League of American Bicyclists: Bicycle Friendly University
- Mouvement Velosympathique (Quebec)
- Share the Road (Canada)
- Cycle Friendly Employer (CFE-UK)
- An equivalent third party certification program for cycling infrastructure and support approved by AASHE.<sup>1</sup>

## Scoring

An institution earns 0.5 bonus points for being recognized at the highest achievable level by a third party certification program for cycling infrastructure and support (e.g., Bicycle Friendly University Platinum). Partial points are available. An institution recognized above mid-level by a third party cycling certification program (e.g., Bicycle Friendly University Gold) earns 0.25 points.

## Reporting Fields

### Required

- Is the institution currently recognized by one of the following bicycle-friendly recognition programs? (Select all that apply.)
  - League of American Bicyclists: Bicycle Friendly University
  - Mouvement Velosympathique (Quebec)
  - Share the Road (Canada)
  - Cycle Friendly Employer (CFE-UK)
  - An equivalent third party certification program for cycling infrastructure and support
- Which of the following best describes the institution's bicycle-friendly recognition level?
  - Highest achievable level (e.g., Bicycle Friendly University Platinum)
  - Above mid-level (e.g., Bicycle Friendly University Gold)
  - At mid-level or below
- Documentation affirming the bicycle-friendly recognition (upload or website URL)

### Optional

- Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)

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<sup>1</sup> Email [stars@aaashe.org](mailto:stars@aaashe.org) to inquire about program equivalence prior to submission.

- 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)

# Campus Pride Index

0.5 bonus points available

## Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that exceed the minimum criteria in the Support for Underrepresented Groups credit through their commitment to policies, programs and practices that are inclusive of LGBTQ+ individuals.

## Criteria

Institution is currently rated at above mid-level by the Campus Pride Index or an equivalent third party recognition program for *LGBTQ+* friendly practices approved by AASHE.<sup>1</sup>

## Scoring

An institution earns 0.5 bonus points when it is rated at the highest achievable level by a third party recognition program for LGBTQ+ friendly practices (e.g., Campus Pride 5 Stars). Partial points are available. An institution rated at above mid-level (e.g., Campus Pride 4 Stars) earns 0.25 points.

## Reporting Fields

### Required

- Which of the following best describes the institution's LGBTQ+ friendly recognition level?
  - Highest achievable level (e.g., Campus Pride 5 Stars)
  - Above mid-level (e.g., Campus Pride 4 Stars)
  - Mid-level or below (e.g., Campus Pride 3.5 Stars and below)
- Documentation affirming the institution's LGBTQ+ friendly recognition (upload or website URL)

### Optional

- A brief description of the institution's LGBTQ+ friendly policies, programs, and practices
- 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

### LGBTQ+

LGBTQ+ is an acronym intended to be inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual and other gender identities, gender expressions, sexualities and asexualities. For more information, see the [LGBTQIA Resource Center Glossary](#) (University of California, Davis).

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<sup>1</sup> Email [stars@aaashe.org](mailto:stars@aaashe.org) to inquire about program equivalence prior to submission.

# Carbon Mitigation Project Development

0.5 bonus points available

## Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that are actively involved in carbon mitigation efforts beyond their campus boundaries by developing offset projects. By developing projects directly, the project implementer can provide learning opportunities for students and minimize offset costs.

## Criteria

Institution has actively participated in carbon mitigation efforts beyond its campus boundary during the previous three years by developing one of the following types of offset projects:

- A. *Peer reviewed offset* project. Institution has developed a peer reviewed carbon offset project that follows an existing carbon reduction protocol.
- B. *Innovative offset* project. Institution has developed an innovative carbon offset project that follows a new or modified project protocol.

## Scoring

An institution earns 0.5 bonus points for having developed a carbon mitigation project during the previous three years that meets credit criteria. Partial points are not available.

## Reporting Fields

### Required

- During the previous three years, the institution has: (Select all that apply.)
  - Developed a peer reviewed carbon offsets project that follows an existing carbon reduction protocol
  - Developed an innovative carbon offsets project that follows a new or modified project protocol
- A brief description of the institution's carbon mitigation projects
- Documentation of the institution's carbon mitigation project (e.g., contract, management plan, project development document, or verification report) (upload or website URL)

### 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

### Innovative offset

Consistent with The Offset Network:

Innovative Offset Projects are those which pursue new strategies outside of currently approved offset methodologies. In general, Innovative Offset Projects may take one of three forms:

- A. Innovative Offset Projects may draw on widely-accepted existing methodologies for generating offsets, offering approaches which reduce the requirements of currently accepted offset protocols such that they are approachable by a greater audience and feasible on a smaller scale.
- B. Alternatively, Innovative Offset Projects may incorporate methodologies used for other purposes but which have not yet been demonstrated specifically in the area of carbon offsets.
- C. Finally, Innovative Offset Projects may put forth truly unique approaches for generating carbon offsets.

Innovative methodological approaches for carbon offsets should be grounded in theory, should reference peer-reviewed literature, and should ideally be supported by anecdotal pilot initiatives.

### **Peer reviewed offset**

Consistent with The Offset Network:

Peer Reviewed carbon offsets are the same as traditional market available carbon offsets with one key difference. Instead of receiving verification by an International Standards Organization (ISO) accredited verifier, Peer Reviewed offset credits are verified by a peer institutional verifier and therefore, at present, may only be used towards an academic institution's carbon neutrality commitment. These credits are non-marketable and may only offset scope 3 emissions, not to exceed 30% of an institutions total emissions.

# Center for Sustainability Across the Curriculum

0.5 bonus points available

## Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that serve as regional centers to help increase the accessibility and diversity of sustainability-oriented training for academic staff.

## Criteria

Institution has, within the previous three years:

- Served as an AASHE Center for Sustainability Across the Curriculum, OR
- Offered one or more professional development opportunities (e.g., a workshop) on sustainability in the curriculum for academic staff (i.e., faculty members) from multiple institutions.

## Scoring

An institution earns 0.5 bonus points for serving as a center for sustainability across the curriculum. Partial points are not available.

## Reporting Fields

Required

- A brief description of the institution's professional development opportunities on sustainability in the curriculum
- Have academic staff from other institutions participated in the professional development opportunities on sustainability with the previous three years?

Optional

- Website URL where information about the sustainability-oriented training for academic staff 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)

# Community Garden

0.5 bonus points available

## Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that promote local food security and wellness by hosting a community garden.

## Criteria

Institution hosts a community garden on institution-owned land that allows local community members to grow their own food.

## Scoring

An institution earns 0.5 bonus points for hosting a community garden. Partial points are not available.

## Reporting Fields

### Required

- A brief description of the institution's community garden
- Website URL where information about the community garden is available

### Optional

- Estimated number of individuals that use the institution's community garden annually
- 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)