

# 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 (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"><li>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)</li></ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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</li></ul>	_____

institution's predominant student body (e.g., graduate and not undergraduate students). (1 point)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	× 2
<b>Total points earned →</b>	<b>Up to 4</b>

## 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) (Include a description of any measurable changes over time.)

### Optional

- Website URL where information about the sustainability literacy assessment 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.org](https://sulitest.org), 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.