

AC 2: Learning Outcomes

8 points available

Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that have adopted sustainability learning outcomes. 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 (i.e., majors, minors, concentrations, certificates, and other academic designations) 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), AND/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. 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
- Documentation supporting the figure reported above (e.g., a list of degree programs and their associated sustainability-focused learning outcomes) (text or upload)
- Do the figures reported above cover one, two, or three academic years?

Optional

- Website URL where information about the sustainability learning outcomes 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.