

AC 10: Support for Sustainability Research

4 points available

Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that have programs in place to encourage students and academic staff to research sustainability. Providing support and incentives demonstrates that sustainability is an institutional priority and can help deepen students' understanding of sustainability issues and attract new researchers to the field. In addition, it helps academic staff explore new areas and encourages broader research on the topic. Addressing sustainability challenges requires solutions and understandings that often cover multiple academic disciplines. Giving interdisciplinary research equal weight as research from a single academic discipline provides an important foundation that allows academic staff to pursue sustainability related research.

Applicability

This credit applies to all institutions where research is considered in employee promotion or tenure decisions. Institutions that do not consider research in promotion or tenure decisions as a matter of policy or standard practice may choose to mark all of the Research credits as Not Applicable. Pursuing one or more Research credits and marking other credits in the subcategory as Not Applicable is not allowed.

Criteria

Institution encourages and/or supports *sustainability research* through one or more of the following:

- An ongoing program to encourage students in multiple disciplines or academic programs to conduct sustainability research. To qualify, the program must provide incentives (e.g., fellowships, financial support, and/or mentorships) that are specifically intended to increase student sustainability research.
- An ongoing program to encourage *academic staff* from multiple disciplines or academic programs to conduct sustainability research. To qualify, the program must provide incentives (e.g., fellowships, financial support, and/or faculty development workshops) that are specifically intended to increase sustainability research by academic staff.
- Published promotion or tenure guidelines or policies that give explicit positive recognition to interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and/or multidisciplinary research.
- Ongoing library support for sustainability research and learning in the form of research guides, materials selection policies and practices, curriculum development efforts, sustainability literacy promotion, and/or e-learning objects focused on sustainability.

Scoring

An institution earns the maximum of 4 points available for this credit by providing all of the incentives and supports listed in the criteria above. Partial points are available based on the number of incentives and/or

supports provided. For example, an institution that provides 2 of the 4 incentives or supports listed would earn 2 points (half of the points available for this credit).

Reporting Fields

Required

- ☐ Does the institution have an ongoing program to encourage students in multiple disciplines or academic programs to conduct sustainability research?
If yes, provide:
 - ☐ A brief description of the student sustainability research program (Include the incentives provided and any positive outcomes during the previous three years.)
- ☐ Does the institution have a program to encourage academic staff from multiple disciplines or academic programs to conduct sustainability research?
If yes, provide:
 - ☐ A brief description of the faculty sustainability research program (Include the incentives provided and any positive outcomes during the previous three years.)
- ☐ Does the institution have published promotion or tenure guidelines or policies that give explicit positive recognition to interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and/or multidisciplinary research?
If yes, provide:
 - ☐ A copy of the promotion or tenure guidelines or policies (text or upload)
- ☐ Does the institution have ongoing library support for sustainability research and learning (e.g., research guides, materials selection policies and practices, curriculum development efforts, sustainability literacy promotion, and/or e-learning objects focused on sustainability)?
If yes, provide:
 - ☐ A brief description of the institution's library support for sustainability research (Include any positive outcomes during the previous three years.)

Optional

- ☐ Website URL where information about the institution's support for sustainability 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)

Measurement

Timeframe

Active programs and policies, and incentives offered within the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission are eligible for this credit.

Sampling and Data Standards

Not applicable.

Standards and Terms

Academic staff (i.e. faculty members)

Consistent with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), academic staff (also known as “faculty members” or “academic employees”) are defined as: “...personnel whose primary assignment is instruction, research, or public service. This includes staff personnel who hold an academic rank with titles such as professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, lecturer, or the equivalent of any of these academic ranks. The category includes personnel with other titles, (e.g. dean, director, associate dean, assistant dean, chair or head of department), if their principal activity is instruction or research.” It does not include graduate, instruction and research assistants, student teachers, or teacher aides.

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 research

Sustainability research is research and scholarship that explicitly addresses the concept of sustainability, furthers our understanding of the interdependence of ecological and social/economic systems, or has a primary and explicit focus on a sustainability challenge.