

# AC 7: Center for Sustainability Research

## Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions with centers, institutes, and equivalent units that produce sustainability research. Organized sustainability research units bring together scholars, professionals, research staff, and students, often across diverse disciplines, to advance our collective understanding of sustainability and help address critical sustainability challenges.

## Applicability

Applicable to institutions that host four or more organized research centers, institutes, and/or equivalent units.

## Points available

A maximum of 6 points are available for this credit.

## Criteria

### 7.1 Organized sustainability research center, institute, or unit

An institution earns 6 points when it has at least one organized **research** center, institute, or equivalent unit that is focused on sustainability and/or on multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and/or transdisciplinary approaches to **sustainability challenges**. Partial points are available. An institution that does not have a sustainability-focused research center, but does have at least one organized research center, institute, or equivalent unit focused on a subject other than sustainability that produces **sustainability research** earns 3 points.

## Measurement

Report on the current status of the institution's programs.

This credit is focused on entities that are affiliated with the institution, e.g, as demonstrated through the use of the institution's name and branding. Research entities that are jointly affiliated to one or more other institutions may also qualify. The institution's participation in sustainability research entities that are affiliated with other institutions is recognized in indicator 8.3.

To qualify as sustainability-focused, a research-producing entity must have a primary and explicit focus on the concept of sustainability, the interdependence of ecological and social/cultural/economic systems, and/or multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or transdisciplinary approaches to sustainability challenges.

## Documentation

Report the following information in the online Reporting Tool.

- Does the institution have at least one organized research center, institute, or equivalent unit that is focused on sustainability and/or integrated approaches to address sustainability challenges? (required)

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- List and description of the institution's sustainability research units. Include sufficient information to make clear the sustainability research focus of each entity.
- Does the institution have at least one organized research center, institute, or equivalent unit focused on a subject other than sustainability that produces sustainability research? (required)

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- List and description of the institution's research units focused on subjects other than sustainability that produce sustainability research

## Glossary

**Research** – The conception or creation of new knowledge. Research may include improving or developing concepts, theories, models, techniques, instrumentation, software, and/or operational methods. [Adapted from the definition used by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).]

**Sustainability challenge** – An issue or situation that threatens or undermines ecological integrity, racial equity and social justice, or the ability of future generations to meet their needs (e.g., biodiversity loss, poverty and inequality, and climate change), OR a goal or objective that contributes to the resolution of such an issue or situation (e.g., ecosystem health, universal human rights, and renewable energy generation). To identify sustainability challenges, it may be helpful to reference the [targets embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), the principles outlined in the [Earth Charter](#), and/or the [Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries](#).

**Sustainability research** – Research activities and scholarly work that explicitly address the concept of sustainability, further our understanding of the interdependence of ecological and social/cultural/economic systems, or have a primary and explicit focus on a sustainability challenge.