



**Proposal of indicators to
embed the Sustainable
Development Goals into
institutional Quality
Evaluation**



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1. Why, What, How and Who?

Table 2: Quality Indicators for Sustainable Development in Higher Education

Why? Indicators can provide a valuable basis for advancing as well as assessing an institution's contribution to the SDGs. Quality frameworks and processes have the potential to promote and support deep as well as wide approaches to sustainability in higher education.

What? The proposed indicators identify the degree of embeddedness of SDGs in an institution. They present a state of play or snapshot of how the institution is performing across its different areas of responsibility in regards with the SDGs.

How? Performance is usually ascertained based on an audit of policies, plans and activities. This can take the form of a questionnaire, focus group or series of interviews. Guidance notes will be provided to assist with collecting data and making judgments against the indicators and generating an institutional score.

Who? The indicator framework has been developed for use by the institution primarily for self-assessment purposes. The framework is also relevant to agencies that will need to validate and externally verify the performance as identified by institutional review.

Following the participatory and action learning process outlined above, a list of quality indicators was generated. The indicators seek to assess and support the embedding of the SDGs at an institutional level within a higher education institution. They are meant to inform quality enhancement as well as institutional development and assessment processes.

Nine different components underpin the indicator framework that adopts a whole-institution approach to the adoption of the SDGs at the University. The components, which are presented in no particular order, include: *governance and strategy; leadership and partnerships; quality strategy and processes; training and guidance; resources and funding; programmes; campus; students and employees; as well as external quality assurance.*

It is important to note, that the framework recognizes variations in terminology and will accept sustainability or sustainable development to mean the SDGs. Only partial points will be awarded when sustainability or the SDGs are interpreted as solely environmental or ecological. Equally, efforts that are limited to the solely social or economic dimension of the SDGs will be subject to the same assessment.

The intention is that this framework of indicators fosters **learning and innovation** rather than solely **compliance**. Those engaged in generating these indicators understand that change is not necessarily a linear process and that discussions and debates are required to

embed SDGs within quality frameworks and processes. There is also recognition that the proposed indicator framework will need ongoing critique and evaluation as well as revision to keep it relevant and ambitious.

It is recommended that the indicator framework is translated into the local language and that terminology is adopted to be relevant to national or regional circumstances (e.g. *University Council, Senate or Board of Governors*). Equally, the framework would benefit from concrete local examples to illustrate what type of evidence or documentation is needed for the assessment criteria to be met. Stakeholder engagement also highlighted the importance of the quality assurance agencies providing guidance or training support alongside the framework to assist with the transition towards institutional review processes and which aligns with the proposed framework.

2. The Indicators

EMBEDDING SDGs AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL			
Components	Indicators	Assessment criteria	Points
1. <u>Governance and Strategy</u>	1.1 The SDGs form part of the institution's governance framework and implementation is reported in a transparent manner.	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The University Council or Senate¹ has explicitly committed to sustainability and the SDGs (4 points) - The Executive² has explicitly committed to Sustainability and the SDGs (4 points) 	8 points
	1.2 The SDGs are included in university strategic documents as well as the University's four year planning cycle.	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the strategic framework or plan of the university recognizes the SDGs (1 point) b) SDGs are embedded in the planning cycle (1 point) c) SDGs are embedded in the targets of the strategic framework or plan (1 point) 	3 points
	1.3 The implementation of SDGs is monitored and evaluated in line with targets and outcomes identified in the strategic documents.	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) There is monitoring and evaluation in place (1 point) b) The outcomes of the evaluation informs the strategic work of the university (1 point) 	2 points

¹ In Aragon, "cláustro". In Andorra, "Junta académica"

² In Aragon, "Consejo de Gobierno". In Andorra, "Consejo universitario"

Components	Indicators	Assessment criteria	Points
	<i>1.4 Leading practice in implementing SDGs is recognized through internal and external awards.</i>	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: a) Staff have been recognized internally with a certificate/ prize/seed funding, promotion (1 point) b) Leading practice examples have been recognized by an external award schemes and similar (1 point)	2 points
2. <u>Leadership and Partnerships</u>	<i>2.1 The institution makes an explicit and visible commitment to embracing SDGs.</i>	Evidence is submitted to confirm two of the following: a) commitment to SDGs present in university webpage b) commitment to SDGs visible in email footers c) commitment to SDGs visible in international profiling d) commitment to SDGs visible in promotional material e) other (left at the discretion of the assessor)	2 points
	<i>2.2 The institution works with other higher education stakeholders to improve the embedding of SDGs in the quality frameworks and processes.</i>	Evidence is submitted to confirm two of the following: a) institution participates in a joint project b) institution participates in a working or expert group c) institution convenes an international meeting on quality and SDGs d) other (left at the discretion of the assessor)	2 points

Components	Indicators	Assessment criteria	Points
	2.3 Institution reaches out to work with external partners to implement the SDGs through staff and students volunteering and other non-formal curriculum opportunities.	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: a) opportunities exist for staff across the institution (0.5) b) opportunities for students across the institution (0.5 point) c) all staff and students have opportunities to participate (1)	2 points
3. <u>Quality Strategy and Processes</u>	3.1 The quality strategy or policy has SDGs as a core commitment.	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: a) SDGs appears as a key heading in the quality policy or strategy (2 points) b) the quality policy or strategy identifies what it understands by quality in relation to the SDGs (2 points) c) institution identifies what and how it is seeking to assess through the quality process in relation to the SDGs (2 points)	6 points
	3.2 There is a strategy or policy that commits staff responsible for quality to professional development specifically on the SDGs.	Evidence is submitted to confirm that the strategy and policy has: a) targets in relation to professional development (2 points) b) timelines in relation to professional development (2 points)	2 points

Components	Indicators	Assessment criteria	Points
	3.3 The quality process assesses progress and makes a quality judgment on the degree of embeddedness of a whole of institution approach to the SDGs.	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: a) progress towards whole-institution adopted of SDGs is assessed by the quality process against specified timelines and targets (2 points) b) there is a quality judgment on the degree of embeddedness of the whole-institutional approach (2 points) c) recommendations are made to extend the impact of efforts at a whole-institutional level (2 points)	6 points
4. <u>Training and Guidance</u>	4.1 Institution has developed guidance documents and/or frameworks for developing good practice in relation to the SDGs	Evidence is submitted to confirm that there is written guidance in relation to the SDGs for: a) teaching and learning (1 point) b) research and knowledge transfer (1 point) c) management and administration (1 point) d) outreach (1 point) e) the guidance has been developed via participatory approaches and are revised regularly (1 point)	5 points

Components	Indicators	Assessment criteria	Points
	4.2 Colleagues with responsibilities for quality at the institutional level have participated in a professional development offering or in a development and change programme related to the SDGs (expressed as %).	Evidence is submitted to confirm the following training has taken place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above 25% of quality related staff have participated (1 point) • above 50% of quality related staff have participated (2 points) • above 75% of quality related staff have participated (3 points) • 100% of quality related staff have participated (4 points) 	4 points
	4.3 Colleagues who have a formal responsibility for teaching and learning have participated in a professional development offering or in a development and change programme related to the SDGs.	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above 25% of staff have participated (1 point) • above 50% of staff have participated (2 points) • above 75% of staff have participated (3 points) • 100% of staff have participated (4 points) 	4 points
	4.4 Colleagues who have responsibility for management and administration have participated in a professional development offering or in a development and change programmes related to the SDGs.	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above 25% of staff have participated (1 point) • above 50% of staff have participated (2 points) • above 75% of staff have participated (3 points) • 100% of staff have participated (4 points) 	4 points

Components	Indicators	Assessment criteria	Points
	4.5 Colleagues responsible for research and knowledge transfer activity have participated in a professional development offering or in a development and change programme related to the SDGs (expressed as %).	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above 25% of staff have participated (1 point) • above 50% of staff have participated (2 points) • above 75% of staff have participated (3 points) • 100% of staff have participated (4 points) 	4 points
5. <u>Resources & Funding</u>	5.1 External and internal funding is found and allocated to SDG initiatives.	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) there has been internal funding incl. letter from awarding body (1 point) b) there has been external funding incl. letter from awarding body (1 point) 	2 points
	5.2 A team is established that is capable and qualified to plan, implement and evaluate SDG initiatives internally. The team is responsible for facilitating engagement and supporting stakeholders in this agenda.	Evidence is submitted to confirm that there is a team in place dedicated to this task. Evidence of the following is required: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) terms of reference of the team that clarifies responsibilities and qualifications (1 point) b) role definitions or responsibilities of individuals that confirm capacity and qualifications (1 point) c) evidence of opportunities being facilitated/encouraged for connected planning (1 point) d) evidence that joint SDG projects across the departments are taking place (1 point) e) evidence that challenges and lessons learnt are taken into account (1 point) 	5 points
6. <u>Programmes</u>	6.1 Degree programmes (UG and PG) provide opportunities to learn about the SDGs (expressed as %).	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above 25% of programmes meet these criteria (1 point) 	4 points

Components	Indicators	Assessment criteria	Points
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above 50% of programmes meet these criteria (2 point) • above 75% of programmes meet these criteria (3 points) • 100% of programmes meet these criteria (4 points) 	
	<p>6.2 Degree Programmess (PG and UG) have practical experience for students to learn how to address the SDGs in practice (work placements, community projects, campus projects, etc.) (expressed as %).</p>	<p>Evidence is submitted to confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above 25% of programmes meet these criteria (1 point) • above 50% of programmes meet these criteria (2 point) • above 75% of programmes meet these criteria (3 points) • 100% of programmes meet these criteria (4 points) 	4 points
	<p>6.3 Programmes offer opportunities for students to understand the global significance and context of the SDGs (expressed as %).</p>	<p>Evidence is submitted to confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above 25% of programmes meet these criteria (1 point) • above 50% of programmes meet these criteria (2 point) • above 75% of programmes meet these criteria (3 points) • 100% of programmes meet these criteria (4 points) 	4 points

Components	Indicators	Assessment criteria	Points
	6.4 Degree Programmes (UG and PG) have explicit competences on sustainable development (expressed as %).	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above 25% of programmes meet these criteria (1 point) • above 50% of programmes meet these criteria (2 point) • above 75% of programmes meet these criteria (3 points) • 100% of programmes meet these criteria (4 points) 	4 points
	6.5 Programmes commit to learner-centred and active learning strategies associated with education for sustainable development (expressed as %).	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above 25% of programmes meet these criteria (1 point) • above 50% of programmes meet these criteria (2 point) • above 75% of programmes meet these criteria (3 points) • 100% of programmes meet these criteria (4 points) 	4 points
	6.6 Programmes have an assessed component in relation to learning and change for sustainable development (expressed as %).	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above 25% of programmes meet these criteria (1 point) • above 50% of programmes meet these criteria (2 point) • above 75% of programmes meet these criteria (3 points) • 100% of programmes meet these criteria (4 points) 	4 points

Components	Indicators	Assessment criteria	Points
<u>7. Campus</u>	7.1 There are volunteer opportunities for engagement with implementing SDGs on campus (expressed as ratio per students).	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are opportunities for 1:4 students to participate (1 point) • there are opportunities for 2:4 students to participate (2 point) • there are opportunities for 3:4 students to participate (3 points) • there are opportunities for 4:4 students to participate (4 points) 	4 points
	7.2 Campus wide quality system to progressively improve facilities performance against the SDGs.	Evidence is submitted to confirm that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) institution can show annual improvement (2 point) b) there is a system of improvement in place that may be accredited (1 point) 	3 points
<u>8. Students and Employers</u>	8.1 There are feedback mechanisms where students provide (incl. anonymous) suggestions for improving the learning experience in relation to the SDGs.	There is evidence that feedback is requested that meets this criteria.	1 points
	8.2 Employers and student alumni provide feedback on the institution's contribution to SDGs.	There is evidence that feedback is received.	1 points
<u>9. External Quality Assurance</u>	9.1 The quality assurance agency, following a verification of evidence of the above, provides a positive report on the institution's performance in relation to the SDGs.	There is evidence that the quality assurance agency: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) has to reviewed and validated the evidence that is requested by this framework (2 point) b) has provided a positive report (2 point) 	4 points

3. The Scoring System

To attain a score against this framework of indicators, institutions would provide evidence to demonstrate how the requirements of the indicator framework have been met. The evidence is assessed according to the criteria and a score out of 100 potential points would be generated. This score can easily be converted into a percentage figure and then classified under the performance levels described below.

LEVEL 1	BRONZE	Score: 0-25%	Reflects commitment to the SDGs
LEVEL 2	SILVER	Score: 25-50%	Making progress towards embedding the SDGS
LEVEL 3	GOLD	Score 50-75%	Leading Practice Nationally
LEVEL 4	PLATINUM	Score 75-100%	Leading Practice Internationally

It is anticipated that the indicators and point system allocated will be refined each year. The Board determined that it should not make the indicators too ambitious or detailed from the start. As higher education institutions improve their performance, indicators will evolve to more accurately capture progress and improvements.