



Integration of SDGs in

- ☐ Institutional governance/strategic level
- ☐ SDGs in research
- ☐ SDGs in campus operations
- ☒ SDGs in curriculum development
- ☐ SDGs in student engagement activities
- ☐ SDGs into community activities
- ☐ SDGs at a whole-institution level

Focus on

- ☒ Goal 1 - No poverty
- ☒ Goal 2 - Zero hunger
- ☒ Goal 3 - Good health and wellbeing
- ☒ Goal 4 - Quality education
- ☒ Goal 5 - Gender equality
- ☒ Goal 6 - Clean water and sanitation
- ☒ Goal 7 - Affordable and clean energy
- ☒ Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth
- ☒ Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- ☒ Goal 10 - Reduced inequalities
- ☒ Goal 11 - Sustainable cities and communities
- ☒ Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production
- ☒ Goal 13 - Climate action
- ☒ Goal 14 - Life below water
- ☒ Goal 15 - Life on land
- ☒ Goal 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions
- ☒ Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals

Summary

At NUI Galway, we seek to transform the university's teaching and learning culture so that sustainability becomes a core part of our student learning objectives and all students engage with sustainability as a core value of the institution. Our new *Introduction to Sustainability Module* provides an exemplar framework to integrate sustainability into the learning experience across the board for all students. The module was developed by the *Community University Sustainability Partnerships* (CUSP), as part of our *learn-live-lead* approach to embedding sustainability into the curriculum. CUSP is a multidisciplinary voluntary team of students and staff from across the university, all working together, with the common aim of establishing the university as a leading institutional model for sustainability. The aim with *learn* is to embed learning about sustainability into all aspects of university learning and research. The aim with *live* is to implement the principles of sustainability through campus operations so our communities understand the importance of sustainable living in all aspects of their lives. The focus of *lead* is developing the campus as a role model for sustainability.

The new module leverages the expertise of staff across the wider university community, who come together, to teach, share, demonstrate, challenge and inspire on sustainability in a holistic way. This transdisciplinary module is future oriented and explores the concept of sustainability in the face of global change. It encompasses a wide range of theory and practice, including, social, cultural, economic and environmental issues and how they are interlinked. The module challenges students to critically reflect on current approaches to sustainability and aims to link international examples to local contexts. The module is delivered twice over the academic year; with in-person and live online and asynchronous options available, to maximise uptake. The overall aim is to develop the module as a university-wide module available to all students.

Outline the benefits of integrating this theme: (List 3)

1. Sustainability requires a multi- and transdisciplinary approach that overcomes challenges around siloing of disciplines. This module is delivered by a multidisciplinary team and moves students beyond disciplinary approaches to offer them the opportunity to learn about all aspects of sustainability, develop greater connections across the university and develop synergies in sustainability. This cross-curricular module promotes transversal sustainability and problem-solving skills. Working in multidisciplinary groups, students address sustainability challenges in relation to all SDGs, which promotes transversal skills such as teamwork, creativity, innovation and communication.
2. The module builds on the existing sustainability knowledge, skills and motivation within the university. By utilising the multidisciplinary, university-wide variety of actors addressing various dimensions of sustainability, the students get the benefit of engaging with a diverse range of subject experts, are exposed to current research and real-life examples. The management of NUIG and its facilities reflects sustainability principles, such as the reduction of waste, enhancement of biodiversity, and efficient energy use, and the estate serves as a "living lab", enabling students to experience and practically learn about sustainability on site. They are also asked for their module assignment to review and evaluate current practices at NUIG, to then propose improvements and further sustainability actions to that can be implemented to promote the SDGs by the institution. This allows students to both gain further insights into individual SDGs and engage further with sustainable practices, their implementation, and impacts.
3. By offering a university-wide sustainability module, all students, regardless of their course of study, will have the opportunity to learn about all aspects of sustainability, beyond what is covered in relation to their own discipline. By ensuring flexible delivery methods the module is open to a wide variety of courses, e.g. in the academic year 2021-22 it was already available to 35 courses including scientist, social scientists engineers and others.

Conclusions and recommendations

Students themselves have asked for more sustainability and this module aims to give as many students as possible the opportunity to learn about sustainability and include this module in their educational programme, helping to prepare them to deal with today's complexity and uncertainty, and the future world.

This innovative module uses the UN SDGs as a framework for the delivery of the module and covers environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability. The multidisciplinary teaching team include contributors from across the university with the relevant expertise and the module has been very successful in providing participating students with an introduction to all aspects of sustainability and the SDGs beyond what is covered in relation to their own discipline. Feedback from students on the transdisciplinary approach has been very positive, they have enjoyed the variety of topics covered, the engagement across disciplines and the relevance to the real-world. By addressing the administrative challenges, the overall aim of developing the module as a university-wide module available to all students, should be feasible. The integration into further courses is currently ongoing and the recommendation is that all disciplines look at the inclusion of transdisciplinary approaches to sustainability in their teaching curriculum. The flexible format, supported by accessible online resources, provides a sustainable delivery of the course, and encourage inclusion in as many courses as possible.

Outline the barriers or challenges encountered in integrating this theme and how you overcame these: (List 3)

1. This innovative new module has caused coordination challenges within the traditional university structure. The administration and timetabling associated with the delivery of module across a wide variety of disciplines and courses, with multidisciplinary contributions has been a time-consuming challenge for module coordinators. For some students the module is a core module, for others optional, and finding space in timetables across the disciplines in a range of schools and colleges has been exceptionally difficult. This has required creativity and teamwork on part of the contributors. By ensuring hybrid, synchronous and asynchronous delivery and running the module in semester 1 and again in semester 2, the potential to include modules in a wide range of courses and the overall reach of the module was vastly increased.

2. With a multidisciplinary team delivering the course, with a mixture of academic and non-academic staff, there is the potential for inconsistency in delivery methods. The initially voluntary contributions made it difficult to demand set standards of contribution and ensure consistent contributions from disciplines. While there was great enthusiasm for the module and for sustainability from contributors, their continuous involvement with the module could not always be guaranteed while this was on a voluntary basis. Formalising contributions and allocating credit to all relevant disciplines addresses this issue and ensures consistency in content and delivery.