



Harper Adams University



SDG Accord Case Study

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

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Summary:

Harper Adams University has undertaken a comprehensive undergraduate course curriculum review known as "Harper Forward". Objectives included ensuring that all of our courses remain ready for the future in an ever-changing world. Our review specifically sought to diversify our education and attract diverse talent to our specialist courses that are focussed on food production and technology, animal health and sustainable living environments for all.

Right from the outset, the SDGs, particularly SDG4 – Quality Education, provided an invaluable framework to ensure the relevant themes of sustainability were embedded into the entire curriculum rather than within individual modules. The course design methodology, referred to as blueprinting, challenged course design teams to consider the whole student journey and how students would engage with topics that dovetail with the SDGs.

The University also developed its own Graduate Attributes, core to individual course programmes. One of six attributes - *Harper Care* - focuses on themes associated with SDG 4.7 relating to sustainability and social justice: for example – by the end of *level 4 undergraduates can describe the impact of contemporary challenges (including climate change, sustainability and achieving inclusion) within their discipline or allied profession, in the context of the SDGs.*

The blueprinting approach gave staff time and space to playfully work with curriculum planning tools, including Harper Care and SDG cards, to develop a student's journey visualisation which was later brought to life in course documentation.

Lydia Arnold, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, Teaching, Learning said "Each course must now identify how it connects to the UN SDGs and how learning outcomes align with Harper Care. This requirement is designed in to every single course that is going forward in our new portfolio for 2024. So, we've put sustainability and the SDGs at the total heart of all that we do within our curriculum".

Outline the 3 key benefits of integrating this theme:

1. SDGs have been embedded into course structures and not just as an add on or afterthought
2. Visibility – utilising the SDGs in the Harper Forward framework has raised the profile, visibility and understanding of SDGs. This has facilitated staff and student discussions with each other and the outside world
3. It has triggered different teaching methods to bring to life contemporary issues i.e. real-world project-based learning and phenomenon-based learning.

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

1. Time and space in the academic calendar. This was overcome through senior leadership making a timetable adjustment to enable staff to step out of their normal working environment for focused thought and discussion
2. The scale of the SDGs. Resource packs were developed to assist with understanding and application
3. Initial lack of understanding. Along with resource packs, course designers were encouraged to share ideas through discussion and collaboration.

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Please outline your conclusions and recommendations to others:

We recommend others frame SDGs as an integral part of course design and curriculum content by making them a fundamental part of curriculum planning through the whole student journey. Allow staff space and time to decide which SDGs are important and facilitate safe spaces to share and collaborate so that a deeper level understanding and consideration is achieved rather than surface level consideration or retrofitting to existing modules. Foster these discussions with resource packs demonstrating how SDGs span learning themes, teaching methods and assessment points.