



### **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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### **Shared Vision, Shaped by Values**

The [NUI Galway Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#) entitled *Shared Vision, Shaped by Values* is built on a foundation of four core values. In developing the strategy, our university community and partners debated and defined these values in detail. They are a statement of our intent to the world and guide us in everything we do. Sustainability emerged particularly strongly as a core value from our students, who demanded action on climate crisis. Given that the UN SDGs frame much national and international debate in the area of sustainability, they form the basis for shaping our sustainability commitments. By connecting our 10 flagship actions for sustainability to the SDGs, this helps our communities understand how the strategic plan relates to the SDGs and the role of the university in global efforts for sustainable development. For the launch of our Strategic Plan, University President, Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, signed the SDG Accord on behalf of NUI Galway; a public statement of our intent and further evidence of our institutional commitment.

Our Strategic Plan commits to *'learn live and lead sustainability across the university mission'*. Our university's SDG vision is implemented using a [Learn-Live-Lead](#) model as detailed in our [NUI Galway Sustainability Strategy 2021-2025](#). From a **learn** perspective, we are striving to embed the SDGs into all aspects of university practise, learning and research so that our students gain the knowledge and skills to demonstrate SDG thinking and decision-making even after graduation. From a **live** perspective, we implement the principles of the SDGs through our campus operations, and from a **lead** perspective, we are committed to demonstrating leadership in the achievement of the SDGs by promoting sustainability scholarship, social justice, human rights and global citizenship as graduate and staff attributes, by embedding sustainability in operations and investments, and building sustainable partnerships with our communities.

### **BENEFITS**

1. Provides an agreed whole-of-institution framework for embedding and progressing the SDGs. The SDGs are an agreed framework for the next 5 years to align policy priorities, operations, objectives and decisions. This will lead to follow-on actions, reporting and accountability across all areas.
2. Communication tool to raise awareness of the SDGs among the campus community, to endorse the SDGs publicly, to demonstrate leadership in the achievement of the SDGs, to provide key stakeholders with opportunities to engage and contribute to our efforts in achieving the SDGs. Having the SDGs as a strategic priority provides us with an opportunity to scale our efforts through collaboration with peer institutions, business, industry and government and non-government sectors.
3. There is a clear business case for integration of the SDGs at the strategic level. By embedding the SDGs in teaching and learning, making the transition to clean energy, reducing waste, enhancing biodiversity, prioritising sustainable food, engaging in sustainable procurement process, our institution stands to gain from a more resilient healthier population that is equipped with the knowledge and skills to understand and address the SDGs. Potential benefits ensuing in relation to staff and student recruitment, research funding, and reputation. Potential for enhancing the University's profile and reputation.

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### BARRIERS

1. Concern over funding and long-term availability of resources to progress the SDGs. A range of ongoing efforts to address funding issues, (e.g. business case and operational efficiencies, research funding, internal funding schemes)
2. Lack of awareness and understanding of the SDGs. Our Sustainability Officer appointed in 2019 plays a leading role in increasing awareness and understanding of the SDGs among students and staff.
3. Governance challenges – because of the transformative and integrated nature of the SDGs, this requires a whole of university approach, co-operation and openness to change and the need to work, across colleges, schools and units and across policy silos in an integrated way. To overcome this barrier, we have established a University Sustainability Advisory Board. The Board consists of a number of senior leaders from across the university and provides strategic oversight of the university's commitment to the SDGs as detailed in NUI Galway Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and the SDG Accord. The Board plays a key role in the development of strong governance structures and supports the integration of the SDGs into daily business at all levels of the University. See our Sustainability Terms of Reference [here](#).



For the launch of the NUI Galway Strategic Plan 2020-2025, our University President, Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, signed the UN SDG Accord on behalf of NUI Galway



NUI Galway is a recipient of the internationally recognised Green Flag by the [An Taisce Green-Campus programme](#) on behalf of the International Foundation for Environmental Education.

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### **CONCLUSIONS:**

The integration of the SDGs in institutional governance is a key aspect in helping us engage and progress the SDGs. Having the SDGs as a strategic priority demonstrates our institutional commitment to the SDGs; opens the door to collaborations with local national and international stakeholders in efforts to address the SDGs; strengthens our campus communities engagement and participation in addressing the SDGs; provides a framework to reflect on the way we operate and ensures the development of SDG based policies, operations and decision making; and provides a blueprint to sharpen the focus of our teaching, research and innovation in pursuit of a better and more sustainable future.

Our recommendation to others:

Recognise and value the leading role that students can play in the transition to a more sustainable future. Students are the current and future SDG implementers, leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs and citizens. At NUI Galway the value of sustainability emerged most strongly from our student community, and our Strategic Plan places students firmly at the heart of the SDG journey.

Mapping your institution's contribution to the SDGs, establishing SDG baselines and running stakeholder engagement workshops as part of the strategic plan consultation phase are steps to consider to build the business case for university engagement in the SDGs.