



# Creating Better Student Outcomes for Sustainability

through applied learning and research

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# Workshop agenda



## 1. The context of our work

EAUC & NUS

## 2. Learnings from the sector – sharing our research on applied learning and research in tertiary education

## 3. Challenges and opportunities identified across the sector

## 4. Embedding Living Lab approaches in tertiary education

## 5. Sharing case studies

Manchester Metropolitan University's approach

Keele University's Approach

## 6. Exploring our visions for Living Labs

## 7. What next?

# Session aims

- Focus on implementing and embedding Living Labs/ applied learning and research in tertiary education
- Share learnings from across the sector
- Explore delegates visions for applied learning and research
- Identify key challenges and opportunities (experienced and anticipated)

# Defining the Living Lab



*"A Living Lab can be pedagogical where applied learning is promoted through utilisation of the campus or community as a test bed for innovation and progressing sustainable development. Where Living Labs take place within the research domain of an institution, this is both a concept and a process for research and innovation implementing potential solutions to the sustainability challenges" (Living Labs Guide, 2019).*

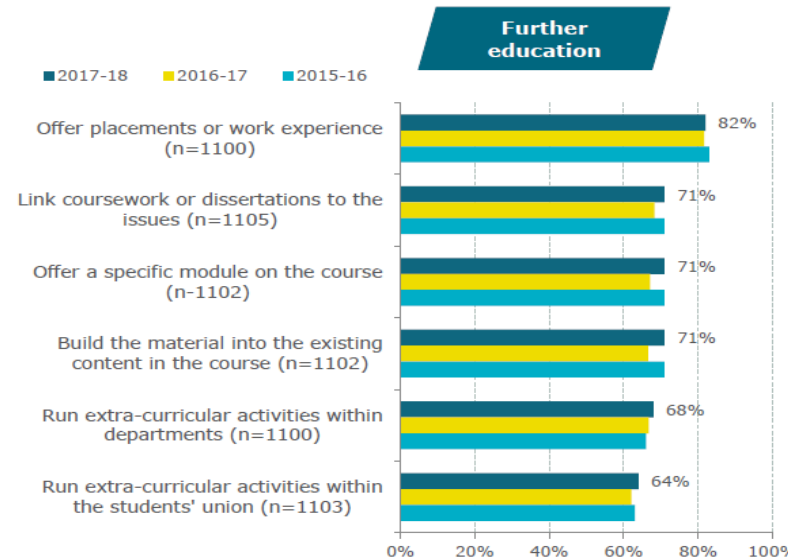
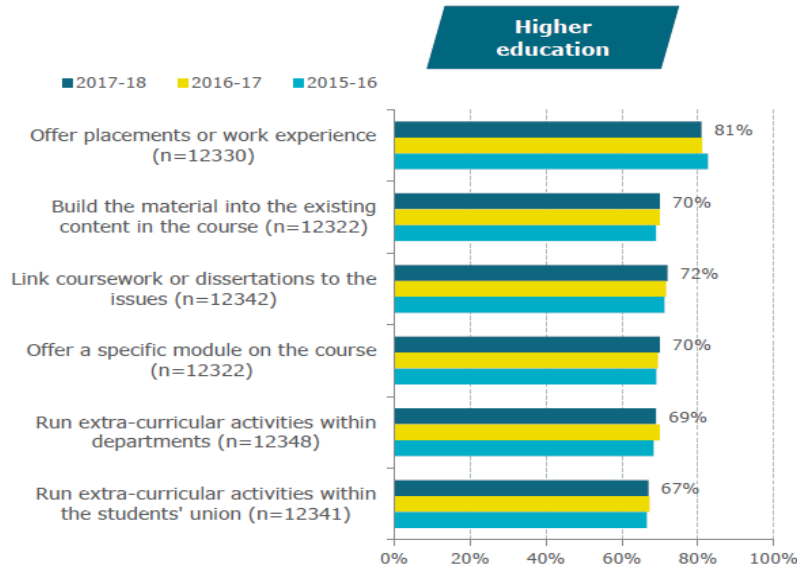
# Supporting the sector (EAUC)

- An EAUC priority
- Progressing sustainability with education and research
- Embedded in EAUC Strategy 2017 – 2021
- Responding to sector needs
- Building on research of 2017



*It is our responsibility to the students, institutions and communities we serve to support the development of pedagogies and research opportunities that enhance employability skills, contribute towards graduate attainment and make societal progress for sustainability in an ever-changing world.*

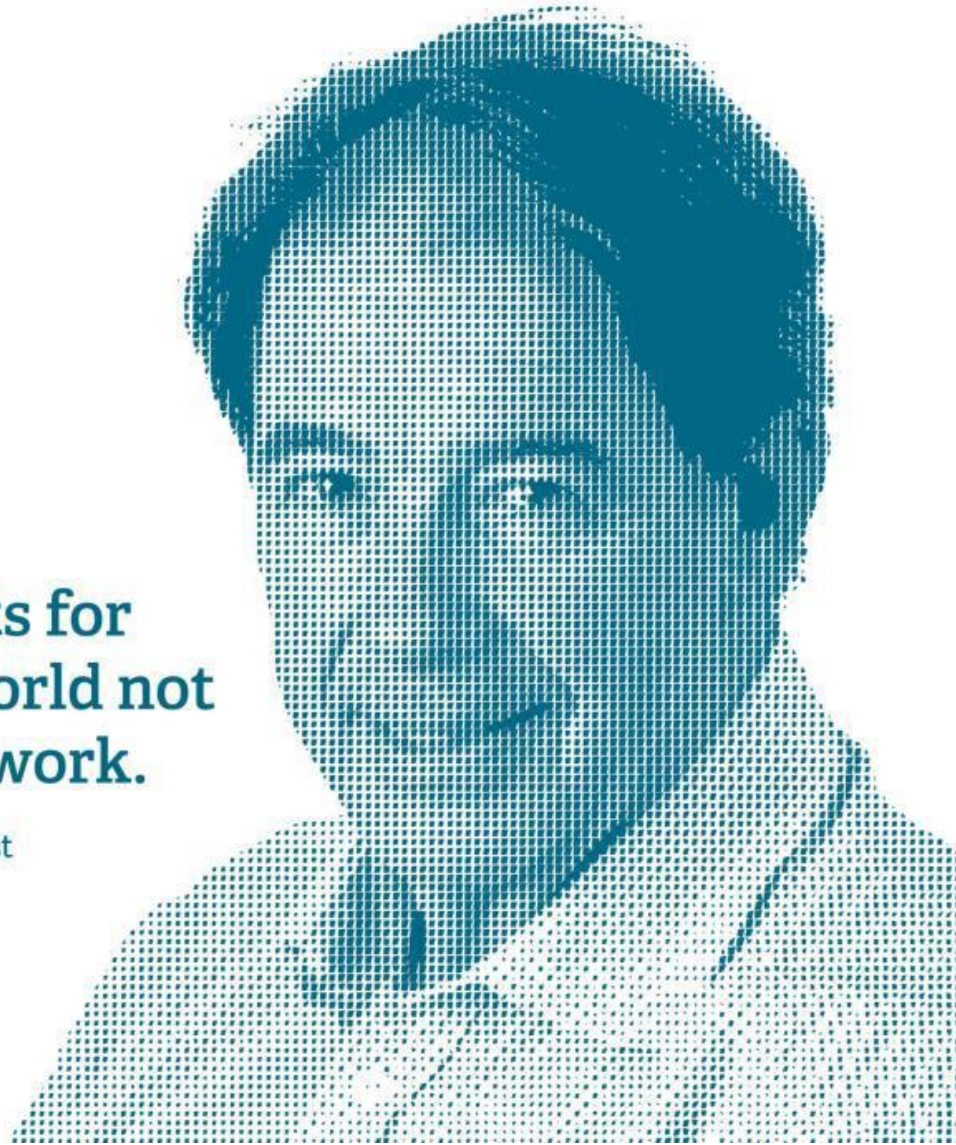
# Supporting student demand (NUS)



When asked to consider the relevance of different ways of including the skills and knowledge to help other people and the environment within their courses, respondents in FE and HE showed a preference for learning through placements or work experience (81% of HE and 82% of FE respondents (n=1002 and n=902) respectively). (NUS Student Skills Survey, 2018)

## NUS Vision for Sustainability

“Students are routinely provided with learning opportunities that are interdisciplinary and enquiry-based, exploring grand challenges and global citizenship perspectives, developing critical thinking skills and political agency.”



**Preparing students for  
the work of the world not  
just the world of work.**

Sir Jonathon Porritt, Environmentalist



# State of the sector

2018 Living Lab Survey found that:

- 41% of respondents were aware of Living Labs being coordinated by a specific part of their institution.
- In most cases coordination was led by sustainability staff (31%), although some were teaching (17%) or estates (17%) led.
- 48% of survey respondents stated that there is no part of their institution that has overall responsibility for co-ordination or development of Living Labs.





# Aspirations

Most survey respondents highlighted an institutional aspiration for the future to develop a whole institution approach for Living Labs (55%) and nearly half aspire to ensure Living Lab approaches are optional for all students.

Half of survey respondents saw it as a medium-high priority for Living Lab approaches:

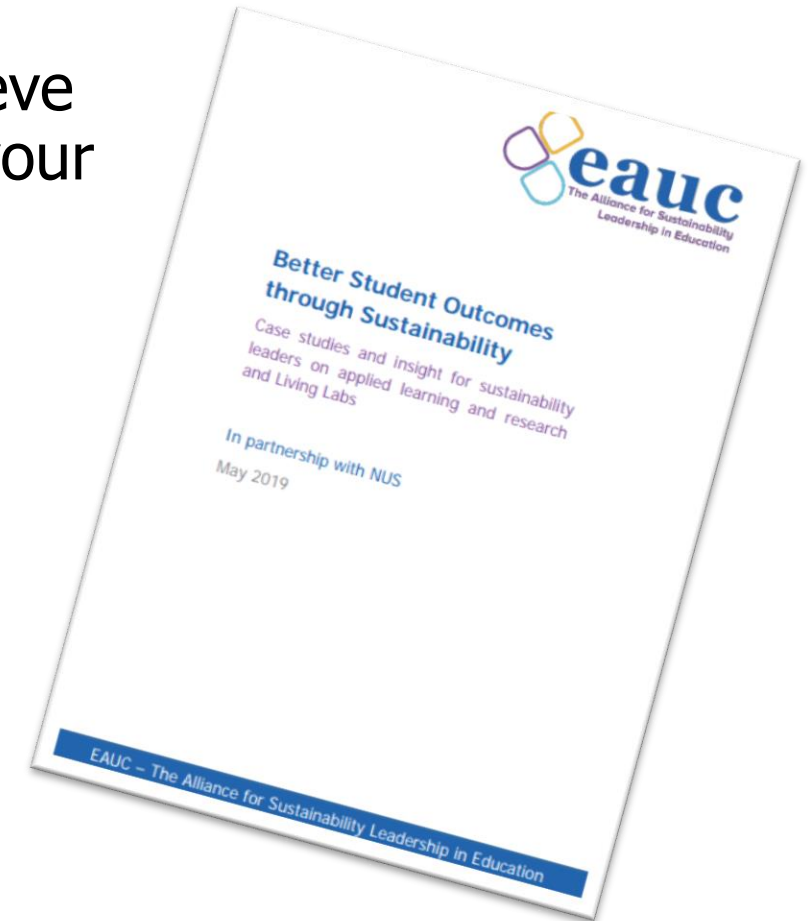
- to become an institutional priority;
- included as part of their institution's community engagement/ outreach strategy;
- and to be included in student engagement opportunities for all institutional development plans.

# Role of EAUC/ NUS



What support or resources would help you to achieve your aspirations for Living Lab approaches within your institution?

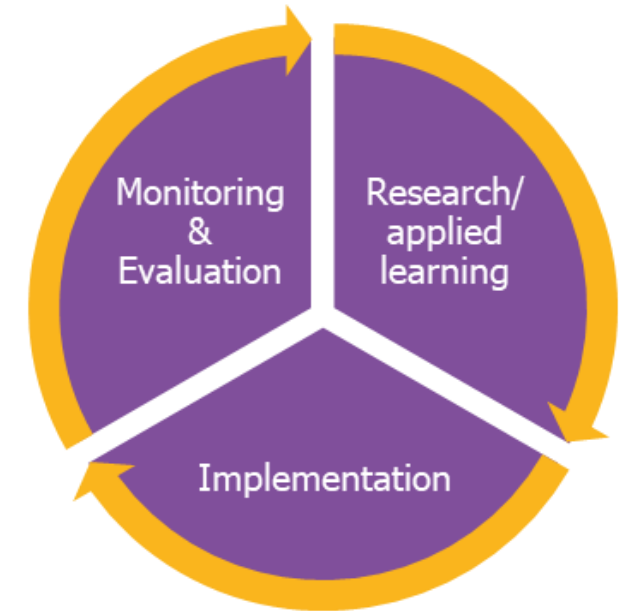
1. Case studies of best practice (67%)
2. Training (67%)
3. Implementation guidance (60%)
4. Networking support (57%)



# The Living Lab Lifecycle: A brief overview



- Creating a holistic approach to learning and research
- Aspiring towards a continuously evolving cycle
- Highlighting the idea of the campus/community as a 'test bed' for innovation and pedagogical opportunity



# Implementation



Sharing case studies of implementation from across the sector...

# Manchester Metropolitan University



*A research and enquiry-based learning approach to Living Labs that focusses on content and methods relevant to academic disciplines and the stakeholders involved.*

- The University Environmental Sustainability strategy explicitly identifies opportunities the campus offers as a Living Lab.
- Encouraging a bottom-up organic approach
- Taking place at varying degrees across a wide-variety of disciplines
- Challenge
  1. Capturing examples
  2. Engagement with full Living Lab cycle



# Keele University

*Optimising the impact of education and research by utilising the campus as a test bed for real-world teaching, learning and research.*

- Making the most of a self-contained campus
- A model of distributed leadership
- Leadership from academics working in partnership with estates and other professional services, and students themselves suggesting innovative approaches to tackling sustainability challenges by using the campus as a test-bed

*“Talk to people - everything comes down to relationships, it is the most valuable time, time you put into people is the time best spent.” - Zoe Robinson, Director of Education for Sustainability*



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# University of Leicester



*Developing a coordinated approach to partnerships and collaborations for applied research and learning as a result of demonstrating the impact and value of student-engaged research.*

- Proving the value of a Living Lab to create resource for institutional co-ordination
- Living Labs Coordinator identifies projects, connects academics and professional services and engages students
- Promoting LLs through research opportunities, undergraduate modules and summer placements



*“Network - go out and meet people from different departments - once you start explaining what LLs are and the importance of them, people are so often keen to get involved.” – Hannah Sellers, Academic Engagement Officer*



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# University of Salford



*Demonstrating staff commitment to creating applied real-world learning and research opportunities for students in the University of Salford Business School.*

- Demonstrating intrapreneurship
- Academic-led
- Embedding Living Labs in a specific module (L6, Business, Ethics and Sustainability)
- Mobilised students to see their own potential
- Goal: University to implement student recommendations



*“...tap into what the students really care about linked with SDGs by leaving the assignment really open. Additionally, by inviting industry experts, various university's interest groups to share different perspectives, challenges towards sustainability students demonstrate a better understanding of the complexity of the sustainability agenda at local and global levels” – Romas Malevicius, Lecturer in Sustainability and Ethics*



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# Activity

In groups map out your:

- Vision (at your institution or across the sector)
- Identify potential challenges/ experienced challenges
- Identify potential opportunities/ experiences opportunities

...for implementing Living Labs/ applied learning and research

# Challenges and Advice (from our research)



## Challenges:

- Measuring impact
- Time
  - To facilitate partnerships
  - To support students
  - To engage with teaching staff
- Implementation: Going beyond campus and community being 'test beds'
- Resourcing: staff and funding
- Gaining high level executive support – influencing institutional priorities
- Engagement: Reaching stakeholders
- Creating a culture of partnership working: breaking down silos

## Top tips:

- Communication
- Networking
- Relationship building
- Work with key influencers internally and externally
- Development of Living Labs often happens organically, and this should be celebrated
- Finding seeds of existing engagement with Living Labs happening organically to share institutional examples

# What next?

- Stay in touch through EAUC Living Labs Community of Practice
- Check out our Living Lab guide (2019) – [Better Student Outcomes through Sustainability](#)
- See EAUC Living Labs resources: [www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/living\\_labs](http://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/living_labs)
- Promote partnership working and share opportunities with NUS For Good platform <https://forgood.nus.org.uk>

# Thank you & Questions



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