



CURRICULUM SURVEY REPORT

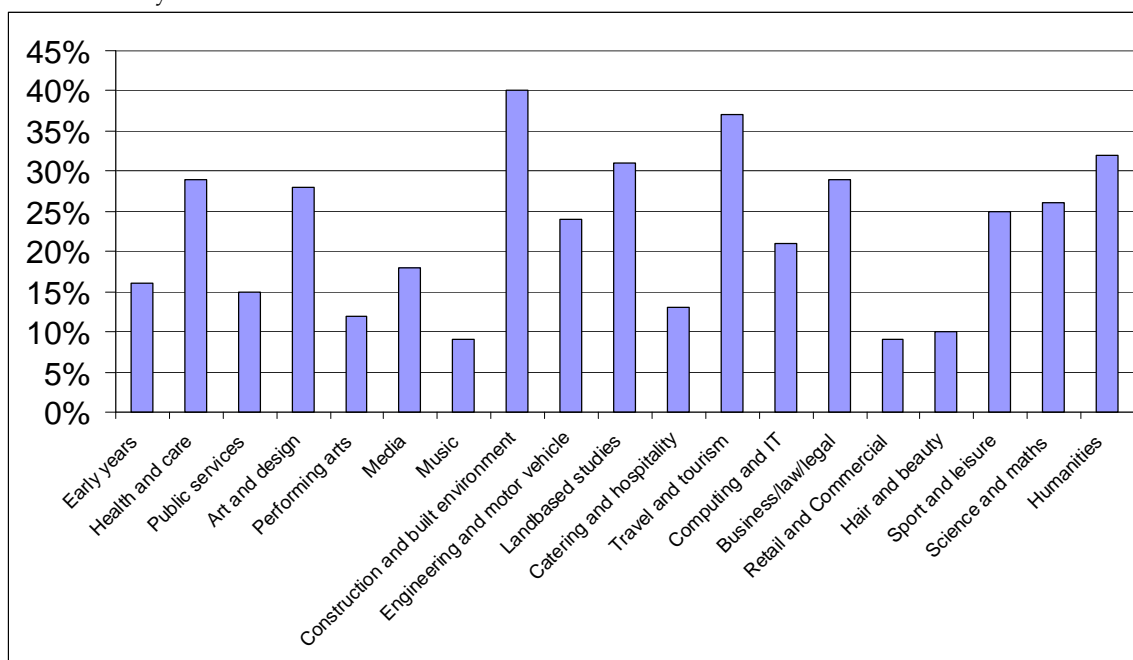
Education is vital to all aspects of our lives, impacting on everything from health, developing a growing and stable economy and tackling social exclusion, to name three examples. Environmental sustainability is no different. If environmental sustainability is to be the norm in the lives of individuals, communities and businesses, as the growing evidence of pressure on natural resources and evidence of climate change suggests, and which is supported by current Government policy, then education is key.

88% of colleges responding to the AoC survey believe that sustainability should feature in all curriculum areas and 91% said that green issues are an attractive learning vehicle for students. The survey provided numerous examples of how colleges around the country are incorporating sustainability into the curriculum from renewable energy to organic gardening and the work they are doing with local communities and businesses.

QUALIFICATIONS

60% of colleges say that current qualification specifications provide opportunities to address sustainability. The main areas colleges address these in are construction and the built environment, travel and tourism, humanities and landbased studies. Other qualification areas in which colleges address sustainability, although not an exclusive list, are ESOL, the Welsh Baccalaureate and entry level qualifications. For examples of qualifications colleges offer, please see Annex A.

Figure 1 - Breakdown of qualification areas in which sustainability is addressed by colleges responding to the AoC survey.



The majority of responding colleges address environmental sustainability in programmes such as the college enrichment programme, tutorial programmes and extra curricula activities. These include student inductions and student groups.

Figure 2 – Examples of other college programmes delivering on environmental sustainability

Rotherham College is dedicated to educating students and staff about environmental issues and encouraging the community to become much more environmentally responsible. They are currently developing a Recycling Project throughout the college to see how they can improve their facilities and make them more eco friendly. This is being run as a Social Enterprise and is student led. So far the students have been involved in collecting and removing recycled waste and are keen to carry out a waste audit. It is intended that food waste will be used on the college farm for example. In addition, a sustainability committee meet regularly to discuss how they can re-cycle waste as a college and inform the new build.

Worcester College of Technology has an Eco-Campus Group that seeks to develop an awareness of sustainability amongst students and staff through extra curricula activities. The group is seeking to develop and deliver curricula aspects of sustainability practice in the future.

Ealing Hammersmith and West London College ran an Aimhigher event about sustainability for students providing workshops run by businesses and the Council's recycling team to cover a number of issues concerning the environment. Their students are also working with students from state and private schools on improving the world around us.

However, responses reveal that as sustainability is not necessarily stipulated within the curriculum it is very much dependent on the tutors' interest and enthusiasm for the subject. Responses further suggest that there is a staff development need in this area which 79% of responding colleges suggest could be overcome by incorporating environmental sustainability into initial teacher training. Colleges recognise the need and importance of developing this agenda - 79% of colleges would like to see qualifications mapped for environmental sustainability opportunities in the same way that they are currently mapped for opportunities to deliver key skills.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

30% of responding colleges around the country are providing courses to employers and working with employers on qualifications and projects related to sustainability. The main reasons given for not providing these courses include a lack of demand from employers and lack of staff experience. 24% of colleges said that they have seen a rise in businesses in their areas producing or supplying sustainable products or services which has created a training demand for the college.

Figure 3 – Examples of courses currently run to improve environmental awareness and practices amongst businesses.

Colchester College run courses for business that include planning and pollution control and a certificate of competence in environmental noise measurement.

City of Bristol College run a one day environmental awareness course aimed at those responsible for developing, managing or implementing environmental policies and activities. This course covers: business and the environment, environmental issues, pollution, energy and water, waste management, transport and legislation.

City College Plymouth offers a course to businesses from across the city to identify ways to save money via improved environmental practices. They also offer a three-day environmental management systems workshop that aims to help companies develop a greater understanding of environmental management, identify and assess environmental opportunities and risks, set environmental objectives and targets and understand the environmental legislation that affects their business.

Strode College runs short courses for industry including: environmental awareness, sustainable development, installing and maintaining renewable energy technologies such as photovoltaic systems and solar water heaters.

Figure 4 – Examples of employer engagement in courses for employment.

South Nottingham College has introduced an NVQ in Recycling Operations as part of the national Train to Gain service, which covers developing a useable recycling practice.

Easton College's Centre of Vocational Excellence in Land Management works in partnership with the Norfolk Broads Authority to train reed and sedge cutters.

Bedford College is currently working on a project delivering renewable energy technology installation and maintenance training to SMEs across South East England. In the past year, over 200 employees representing about 150 businesses from across the UK attended the college's photovoltaic and solar water heater installation courses.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

The results for offering courses to individual learners mirror those for employer engagement with around 30% of colleges providing courses to individuals. Colleges often find these shorter courses attract people back into learning, building confidence and enthusiasm. Learners who attended these courses then go on to gain qualifications. Where colleges do not offer these, the reasons for not doing so are split evenly between lack of demand, lack of funding and lack of staff experience. Individuals can attend any courses provided by colleges so long as they meet the qualifying criteria. Figure 5 below gives examples of short courses offered by colleges aimed at individuals in this area.

Figure 5 – Examples of course aimed at individual learners.

Duchy College, part of Cornwall College offers day courses including: Practical Conservation Skills and Green Woodworking.

Park Lane College, Leeds runs a 'reduce your carbon footprint' course. The course is run by a team of conservation and environmental tutors who lead learners through practical energy saving techniques and the science behind climate change.

Bridgwater College offers day courses in willow weaving for your garden, pruning, 'the garden you can eat' and winter propagation.

CONCLUSION

Colleges recognise the importance of environmental sustainability and would like to offer more in this area. Colleges are offering qualifications and training in areas such as renewable energies, waste management, sustainable construction, countryside management and horticulture. They are offering courses to employers to run their businesses more sustainably and collaborating with them on qualifications and training.

Evidence from the survey also points to colleges incorporating environmental sustainability in to most other college programmes.

While 88% of colleges responding to the survey stated that environmental sustainability should feature in all curriculum areas, it does not currently feature in all curriculum areas. In many cases this is dependent on tutors' interest. The survey shows that if colleges are to fully incorporate sustainability into the curriculum then staff development needs to be addressed.

Education is key to changing behaviour – road safety, responsible drinking and healthy eating campaigns all have a strong educational element. If sustainability is to be second nature then this also requires education. The survey suggests that establishing environmental sustainability as a requirement in the curriculum, teacher training and mapping qualifications for it would all make a substantial difference.