

The SDG Accord

The University and College Sector's Collective Response to the Global Goals

University College for Interdisciplinary Learning – Creating a Sustainable World module



The University of Manchester

SDG focus

- ☒ Goal 4 - Quality education
- ☒ Goal 11 - Sustainable cities and communities
- ☒ Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals

What did you do?

The University of Manchester's "Creating a Sustainable World" module, part of the University College for Interdisciplinary Learning (UCIL), aims to embed sustainable development for all students who have an option to take this module. The module explores the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in depth and examines how the University of Manchester contributes to these goals through its teaching and research. The module highlights the complex ways social, economic, and environmental processes are linked and charts the origins and principles of sustainable development

What were the benefits and outcomes?

The module has had a significant impact on both students and staff. Students gain a comprehensive understanding of sustainability challenges and the skills to address them, which enhances their employability in the competitive field of environmental and sustainability work. Staff members benefit from the integration of sustainability into their teaching practices, which aligns with the University's wider social responsibility. The wider community benefits from the University's commitment to sustainability, as it fosters a culture of environmental responsibility and awareness of future citizens and leaders.



Image: University College for Interdisciplinary Learning at The University of Manchester

What barriers or challenges did you encounter in embedding sustainability into your learning and teaching practice and how did you overcome them?

One of the main challenges in embedding sustainability into learning and teaching practices is the complexity of the subject matter, which requires an interdisciplinary approach. The University overcame this challenge by offering a range of sustainability-focused units within its dedicated UCIL, allowing students to learn from concepts regardless of their study programme. Additionally, the module addresses the need for partnerships and collaboration, as highlighted by SDG 17. This involves creating complex partnerships across the University among staff, students, and alumni, which is time-consuming to deliver but yields significant impact for students in recognizing the importance of partnerships to achieve the goals.

What are your conclusions and recommendations for others?

The University of Manchester's experience with the "Creating a Sustainable World" module demonstrates the importance of integrating sustainable development and the SDGs into higher education. Recommendations for others include adopting an interdisciplinary approach, fostering partnerships and collaboration, and aligning teaching practices with global sustainability goals. By doing so, educational institutions can equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to address the pressing social and environmental challenges of our time.

Web link to further information:

<https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=74084>