



## Education for Sustainability (EfS) Fund and Toolkit



### SDG focus

☒ Goal 4 - Quality education

### What did you do?

Our **Education for Sustainability (EfS) Fund** (which offers up to £10,000 per project) and **EfS Toolkit** support staff to integrate EfS into the taught curriculum. The fund has supported 18 projects over the last two years across a wide range of disciplines, with a holistic conceptualisation of EfS, including knowledge, competencies, values and action orientation, and an emphasis on interdisciplinary learning. Staff are encouraged to use the toolkit, co-created by staff and students in 2024, to inform their thinking, help them to identify the ways they're already delivering EfS, consider student skills and employability via learning and assessment, and inspire them to see the transformative potential of EfS for them, their colleagues and students. As a living document, the toolkit facilitates the sharing of EfS practice. Fund awardees are invited to communicate the findings of their projects internally and externally, through events, reports and a variety of communication channels.

### What were the benefits and outcomes?

Though in their early stages, we are already seeing encouraging benefits and outcomes from both the EfS Fund and the Toolkit. Each of the funded projects demonstrate lasting potential for change. Examples of the work enabled by the fund include:

1. Staff in the Dickson Poon School of Law were awarded funding to examine the opportunities, barriers and ways forward for mainstreaming sustainability into the law curriculum through collaborative mapping exercises, knowledge exchange and evaluation and scenario planning. This has led to a School-level commitment to embed sustainability across the curriculum, further work to identify intervention points to incorporate EfS and cross-disciplinary workshops on EfS and Cultural Competence.
2. Colleagues in the Faculty of Life Sciences & Medicine, Faculty of Dentistry, Oral & Craniofacial Sciences, Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery & Palliative Care and the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience were awarded funding to embed interprofessional sustainable healthcare sessions within existing curricula at King's. A three-day retreat led to cross-faculty agreement on 14 interprofessional education learning outcomes to support content creation and delivery, and the recruitment of an interprofessional student group to co-design and pilot the content.
3. A project based in Nutritional Sciences was able to develop a Living Lab programme in collaboration with King's Food, the university's in-house catering service. Living Labs enable students to apply their disciplinary learning in real-world contexts. The project involved workshops co-designed by students which yielded project ideas, a pathway for student research project delivery and an enhanced awareness of needs, particularly around interest-holder engagement, scheduling, governance frameworks, equal opportunities and resourcing to coordinate and supervise students. The project connected King's academic expertise in physiology, education, qualitative research, and brought these together with King's Food expertise in nutritious, attractive menu design, sustainable catering and customer behaviour. The King's Food Living Lab programme expects to be able to offer projects to students in academic year 2025/26.

In addition to these project outcomes, the creation of the EfS Toolkit and Fund has also increased awareness of EfS internally. We are starting to see more programme and module leads working to embed sustainability in curricula through our Quality Assurance processes, such as our annual continuous enhancement review process for taught programmes. The enthusiasm and support for EfS demonstrated by staff and students across the institution has also led to plans to pilot EfS Leads in our faculties.

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

1. A key barrier has been a lack of capacity and time for staff to engage with the EfS agenda and consider how they can approach embedding sustainability into learning and teaching practice. To overcome this, we created the EfS Toolkit to provide information and guidance for staff, provided CPD training to help staff to develop the necessary skills

and the fund enables academic project leads to recruit student research assistants to support this work. We have attended faculty education committees and held workshops for academic staff to help them consider potential approaches to EfS within their disciplines. We are also piloting a new EfS Lead role in a number of faculties, to provide local leadership, support and encouragement for colleagues.

2. We initially found that pockets of good practice and curriculum embeddedness were somewhat piecemeal and fractured across the organisation. We have therefore been working hard to identify intervention points to embed sustainability in our quality assurance processes to ensure we create lasting and transformative change, such as the curriculum design framework, programme and module approval process and the annual and periodic review processes.
3. We have also found it challenging to obtain a comprehensive view of the extent to which sustainability is currently embedded in the curriculum. King's has recently adopted a new curriculum management platform which will provide the data source we need to undertake an audit of the curriculum using an AI tool. This will allow us to establish a baseline for assessing the degree to which sustainability is embedded in the curriculum. We are also adopting the three optional questions on sustainability in the National Student Survey for the first time in 2025, which will provide us with valuable feedback on the perceptions and experiences of graduating students during their undergraduate education.

### **What are your conclusions and recommendations for others?**

- To provide a range of written and in-person practical support, information and advice for colleagues to support them to adopt EfS in their teaching. We hope to develop a more comprehensive CPD offering that presents colleagues with a more defined 'journey' through EfS, from baseline knowledge and understanding through to curriculum development and implementation.
- To provide funding mechanisms to encourage innovation and interdisciplinary approaches to EfS.
- To consider intervention points to embed sustainability in quality assurance processes, to ensure long-lasting and systemic change.
- To recognise that embedding sustainability in the curriculum takes time and patience, but the rewards are significant!

### **Web link to further information**

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/climate-sustainability/education>

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/higher-education-from-2010-to-2024-where-have-we-been-and-where-do-we-go>