



Launching *An Introduction to Climate Action*, a Sustainability-Focused Massive Open Online Course



HUMBER
POLYTECHNIC

Integration of SDGs in

- ☒ Research
- ☒ Campus operations & infrastructure
- ☒ Curriculum
- ☒ Student engagement
- ☒ Skills development & careers
- ☒ Community activities
- ☒ Whole institution approach

SDG focus

- ☒ Goal 4 - Quality education
- ☒ Goal 9 - Industry, innovation, and infrastructure
- ☒ Goal 13 - Climate action

What did we do?

Over the past year, Humber Polytechnic took another major step forward in its climate leadership journey by launching *An Introduction to Climate Action*, a free, self-paced online course designed to help individuals understand and respond to the climate crisis. This course

extends Humber's commitment beyond its own campus and into the global community by making climate education accessible to everyone.

The course covers key topics such as measuring personal and organizational carbon footprints, managing climate-related anxiety, and creating actionable climate plans. It integrates Indigenous perspectives and encourages learners to develop a personalized plan that connects their strengths to real-world climate solutions. Humber has recently advanced our net zero target from 2050 to 2029, through significant implementation of greenhouse gas emissions reduction activities. Alongside Humber's new sustainability vision, the polytechnic is focusing on enabling a sustainable campus experience for students, staff and faculty, while empowering learners to shape a more sustainable future. It reflects the institution's approach to sustainability as a whole-campus effort that spans operations, learning, and engagement.

The course is part of Humber's Sustainability Strategic Vision, released in early 2025, which is centered around three pillars:

- Educate: Shape sustainability mindsets across all learners.
- Enable: Make campus operations and spaces reflect sustainability values.
- Engage: Involve students and staff in leading and participating in climate initiatives.

By aligning educational content with strategic goals, Humber is ensuring sustainability is not just taught but lived every day.



Image description: Online Course Registration page

What were the benefits and outcomes?

Launching the Climate Action MOOC has helped Humber expand its impact beyond its own community, offering foundational climate education to a global audience. Participants gain critical knowledge in just a few hours and receive a digital badge upon completion, which can be used to showcase their skills and commitment. Within Humber, the course has deepened engagement among faculty, students, and staff. It acts as a bridge between academic knowledge and real-world action, encouraging a culture of learning and

responsibility. By incorporating Indigenous worldviews and addressing emotional responses to climate change, it also supports equity and well-being.

What barriers or challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them?

Creating a course that's both informative and accessible to a wide audience posed several challenges. Humber leveraged internal collaboration and various perspectives to balance in-depth scientific information with clear and easy to understand real world examples.

Promoting the course to a broad audience was a key priority of this project. Humber developed a multi-channel marketing plan including digital ads, social media, and partnerships with sustainability networks to ensure it reached learners across Canada and beyond.

Conclusions and recommendations for others

Humber's experience shows that high-impact sustainability education is both possible and necessary. Free, open-access courses like this one can extend institutional impact far beyond the campus classroom.

Here are a few recommendations for others:

- Start with accessibility. Removing cost and time barriers opens doors for more learners.
- Be collaborative. Involve diverse voices and expertise, especially from equity-deserving groups.
- Focus on action. Give learners the tools to make real changes in their lives and communities.
- Align with a broader strategy. Ensure learning initiatives support institutional sustainability goals.

By blending education, community engagement, and climate leadership, Humber is helping shape a more sustainable future, not just for its students, but for anyone ready to act.