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Sustainability Skills Survey

1. Introduction

Sustainability is to be at the heart of the strategic vision for the newly transformed institution, created as a result of the merger between University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Swansea Metropolitan University and University of Wales. This will be a unique and defining feature, around which all governance and activity is framed. Details regarding these plans are given in the document “*Delivering for a Sustainable Wales; INSPIRE (The Institute for Sustainable Practice, Innovation and Resource Effectiveness)*” (Davidson, J. 2011).

To inform the plans for embedding sustainability throughout the organisation, a sustainability skills survey of all academic and non-academic staff was conducted. It was recognised that there is sustainability expertise across the entire university community, hence the inclusion of all staff. It also demonstrated the parity of esteem that the University aspires to between all members of staff.

The survey fulfilled the original aim of developing an evidence base of existing expertise, experience and interest in sustainability. The work identified opportunities for new curricula and research and engaged all staff on what it means to have sustainability as a core value and strategic priority.

Although papers are going to be published detailing the findings and opportunities resulting from the project, there has been significant interest from higher education institutions throughout the UK wanting to replicate the survey. Therefore, this document provides the questions that were used, in order to help other institutions take their sustainability agenda forwards. It is also recommended that institutions refer to “*The Future Fit Framework*” (Sterling, 2011), which provides an invaluable resource to help encourage and embed sustainability into curricula.

The authors are keen to hear from any institutions that implement this or similar surveys and would be interested to compare findings. It is kindly requested that this document is appropriately acknowledged in any replication and subsequent reporting.

2. Sustainability Skills Survey

The following 8 sections detail the questions used within the sustainability skills survey. It should be noted that separate surveys were used for academic staff and non-academic staff. The difference between the surveys was that the non-academic staff survey did not include sections D: Research and Development, and E: Sustainability Literacy and the Curriculum.

The surveys were web-based and developed and deployed using the service provided by Bristol Online Surveys <https://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/>.

Experience from implementing the survey highlighted the importance of conserving the anonymity of staff within reporting of data. It is therefore recommended that institutions carefully consider the potential for staff to be identified, whether this is via respondents being members of Schools with small numbers of staff, or providing information specific to their unique research interests.

Section A

A1: Opening Statement from the Vice-Chancellor

Each Vice-Chancellor provided an opening statement for their institution.

A2: Welcome

Welcome to the Sustainability Skills Survey.

This survey has been developed and is managed by the INSPIRE (Institute for Sustainable Practice, Innovation and Resource Effectiveness) team at University of Wales Trinity Saint David. INSPIRE is led by Jane Davidson, former Environment and Sustainability Minister in Wales and ably supported by her colleagues, Peter Davies (Commissioner for Sustainable Futures in Wales) and Andy Middleton (renowned sustainability entrepreneur). Dr Gavin Bunting, Senior Lecturer, University of Wales Faculty, has been seconded to INSPIRE to take this project forward.

The survey is an important step to embed sustainability into the new university. It also provides an opportunity for you to reflect and put forward suggestions on what it means to have sustainability as a core value and strategic priority.

The survey can be saved part way through and takes around 10-15 minutes for support staff and 20 minutes for academic staff to complete.

Please note that once you have clicked on the CONTINUE button at the bottom of each page you cannot return to review or amend that page

A3: Sustainable Development / Sustainability

What is it?

The World Commission on the Environment defined sustainable development as "**development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs**". This definition has been picked up worldwide, reflecting an increasing concern that actions are being taken across the globe which put this concept in peril. The idea of acting more sustainably has emerged in response to global concerns about social justice as well as the state of

the planet. In particular, current concerns focus on the threat to human wellbeing presented by climate change at the same time as concerns remain about the integrity of ecosystems.

Acting sustainably is about balancing social, environmental and economic needs in a way that does not compromise future generations and helps ensure well-being and a better quality of life.

Sustainable Development and Decision Making

SD is increasingly being used as a philosophical framework and planning tool for better decision-making that can lead to the development of better services, creating more benefit with less resource. When we talk about sustainable development, we mean an approach to decision making that:

- Embraces the long-term.
- Demands integration.
- Reduces complexity.
- Encourages joined-up thinking.
- Encourages active participation.

Welsh Government Commitments

Wales has had a legislative commitment to have a sustainable development scheme since 1999. This commitment aims to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of people and communities in Wales over the long term. It is firmly focused on improving and sustaining people's quality of life and well-being, now and in the future.

The Welsh Government has now announced that it will **legislate to ensure that Sustainable Development is not only the central organising principle of government, but also that of the public sector in Wales.**

In taking this agenda forward, Wales is following in the lead of successful global businesses, e.g. Unilever, Procter and Gamble and on a UK level, Marks and Spencer's, Cooperative Stores Ltd and others, who recognize and state publicly that being sustainable for the longer term is good for business. Declining natural resources will increase in price so investing in the green economy or greening the economy makes both economic and social sense. Integrated reporting on sustainability is becoming the norm.

What does it mean for the University?

A key challenge to a modern university is to create appropriate teaching and knowledge exchange programmes to ensure that the knowledge we develop meets policy and user needs within society, and to set an example in doing so. In addition, there is currently a pressing challenge to address a transition to a low carbon society within a rapid time scale.

A4: Data Protection statement:

Where the data recipients receive any personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998) ("the Act") from the data subjects they have to ensure it fully complies with the Eight Principles defined within that Act. This is to ensure it will only be used for the specific purpose of developing the evidence base regarding existing expertise, experience and commitment to sustainability of all

staff across the three institutions: University of Wales: Trinity Saint David, the University of Wales and Swansea Metropolitan University.

In fulfilment of its obligations under the Act the data recipients shall each have such systems in place as to ensure:

a) Full compliance with the Act.

b) In particular, compliance with the Seventh Data Protection Principle which requires that personal data is kept secure, and the Third Data Protection Principle that personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is proposed.

c) The reliability of all its employees who may be involved in processing the personal data and shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that all its employees comply with this clause where they are processing any personal data on behalf of the data recipients and shall allow the data recipients and / or his / her nominees reasonable access to such information as is necessary to ensure that it is complying with the above provisions and the Act as a whole.

Cookies, personal data stored by your Web browser, are not used in this survey.

A5: Are you a member of:

(this page is a final check to ensure staff are on the correct survey)

If you are a member of **non-academic staff (e.g. support, professional, managerial)** and have no teaching or research responsibilities please [click here](#) to be redirected to the appropriate survey.

If you are a member of **academic staff**, or have teaching or research responsibilities, please click the **continue** button below.

Section B: Your Sustainability Skills / Experience

1. Do you see opportunities within your current role to help the university become a more sustainable organisation?

Yes

No

If yes please list opportunities

2. Do you have an academic background related to sustainability?

Yes

No

If yes within which subject area?

3. Do you have experience working on sustainability related projects / initiatives or teaching sustainability concepts?

Yes

No (please go to question 5)

If yes can you give some details?

4. If you do have experience working on sustainability related projects / initiatives or teaching sustainability concepts, within which area(s) would you say they best fit?

Please tick all that apply

a) Economic	
b) Social	
c) Environmental	
d) Individual and community wellbeing	
e) Political	
f) Philosophical	
g) Ethical	
h) Other (please specify)	

5. Are you a member of a professional body or association (note: it does not need to be associated with sustainability)?

Yes

No

a. If yes please list:

a. If yes is sustainability or sustainable development part of their remit or concern?

Yes

No

Don't know

i. If yes please list which professional bodies or associations

6. Have you undertaken any training / courses / academic qualifications related to sustainability?

Yes

No

If Yes please list.

7. Are you in touch with any former students (alumni) whose jobs are related to sustainability?

(Dawe et. al, 2003)

Yes

No

If yes, where known, can you give some details?

8. Please indicate whether you:

	Yes	No	Partially
a) Are interested in sustainability			
b) Are unsure what sustainable development means			
c) Feel confident explaining sustainable development as a concept			

Please note the following 3 questions are optional

9. As a reflection of your actions at home and work please indicate whether you:

	At Home			At Work (including commute)		
	Yes	No	Sometimes	Yes	No	Sometimes
a) Actively minimise your amount of waste						
b) Seek to minimise the amount of energy (electricity, gas, coal, oil) you use.						
c) Minimise your travel by motorised transport						
d) Try to minimise your impact on the environment						
e) Walk, cycle or use public transport as a frequent mode of travel.						
f) Minimise water usage						
g) Grow your own food						
h) Take into account ethical / environmental values within the goods and services you buy.						
i) Are actively involved community projects related to sustainability in your spare time.						

10. Are you interested in living a more sustainable lifestyle?

Yes

No

Maybe

If no please go to question 12

11. What are the top 3 barriers to you living a more sustainable lifestyle?

Tick all that apply

	Home	Work	Comments
a) Unsure what I should be doing			
b) Too difficult			
c) Too time consuming			
d) Too costly			
e) Lack of collective action to make a difference			
f) Lack of support within my community			
g) Lack of support at work			
h) Not a high priority			
i) Other (please state)			

Section C: Sustainability Concepts and Initiatives

12. Sustainability of the University estate

Please prioritise on a scale of 1-5 to indicate your preference for [further] investment in /focus on the following initiatives on the University estate:

	High priority 1	2	3	4	Low priority 5
a) Recycling initiatives					
b) Energy efficiency					
c) Renewable energy					
d) Water efficiency					
e) Incorporation of sustainability criteria into procurement guidelines					
f) Secure bicycle storage					
g) Changing and washroom facilities					
h) Staff and student allotment areas					
i) Increasing biodiversity					
j) Provision of green space					
k) Employee behaviour incentives, e.g. cycle to work.					
l) Car sharing arrangements					
m) Subsidised access to sports centre facilities					
n) Enabling staff to work from home					

13. Sustainability Initiatives in Higher Education.

Please rate your familiarity with the following initiatives related to sustainability in Higher Education:

	Actively involved	Very familiar	Familiar	Heard of but not familiar	Never heard of
a) A university leaders' statement of intent on sustainable development – Universities UK					
b) Carbon Trust					
c) Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC)					
d) Green Academy: curricula for tomorrow					
e) Environmental Management Systems, e.g. Green Dragon or ISO14001					
f) People and Planet Green League					
g) Sustainability in Higher Education Developers (SHED) Network					
h) The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC)					
i) EAUC – Learning in Future Environments (LiFE)					
j) The Green Gown Awards					
k) The Higher Education Academy's work on education for sustainable development					
l) Universities that Count					

14. Please rate your familiarity with the following concepts / initiatives related to sustainability:
(adapted from Dawe et. al, 2003)

	Very familiar	Familiar	Heard of but not familiar	Never heard of
a) The Brundtland definition: <i>'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the abilities of future generations to meet their own needs'</i>				
b) Intergenerational equity				
c) The Kyoto Protocol				
d) The Precautionary Principle				
e) The Convention on Biodiversity				
f) The Framework Convention on Climate Change				
g) The five principles of sustainable development as outlined in the UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy, 2005.				
h) The Welsh Government's Sustainable Development scheme, 'One-Wales One-Planet'				

Section D: Research and Development

This section was not included in the survey of non-academic staff.

If this section is not relevant to you please scroll to the bottom of the page and click “Continue”.

There are opportunities for the university to be sector leading as a result of developing new research clusters around sustainability concepts. The following questions will assist in identifying opportunities for developing these clusters.

15. What is your broad academic discipline?

Please briefly list your research interests:

16. Is sustainability currently part of your research interests?:

Yes

No

If yes please give further information

a. If yes within which area(s) would you say they best fit?

Economic	
Social	
Environmental	
Individual and community wellbeing	
Political	
Philosophical	
Ethical	
Other (please specify):	

17. Would you like to [further] embed sustainability into your research?

Yes

No

Maybe

18. If you have any ideas for research relating to sustainability please provide further details below:

19. If you have any ideas for linking sustainability research, including student projects, to practical examples on the university estate please give details:

20. I would like to be a member of a sustainability research cluster:

Yes

No

Maybe

21. Is sustainability integrated into the research and development strategy for:

	Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A	If yes please state School(s), Faculty(s), Programme(s)
a. Your Faculty					
b. Your School					
c. Your Programme					

Section E: Sustainability Literacy and the Curriculum

This section was not included in the survey of non-academic staff.

The aim of the following questions is to ascertain how much sustainability features in the programmes that the university delivers and what opportunities there are for further development.

Sustainability Literacy

The Higher Education Academy's vision for their Education for Sustainable Development work is to: *develop curricula and pedagogy that enhance graduates' capabilities to contribute to sustainable and just societies* (The Higher Education Academy, 2012).

Sustainability literate graduates should be able to critically analyse the issues surrounding the challenges we face in society through a sustainability lens and understand how this affects debates / thinking within their own subject area. Importantly, sustainability also requires cross and interdisciplinary thinking, thus students should be encouraged to think outside of their own specialism, to recognise and analyse interconnections between systems (Haslett et. al., 2011).

Thus it is suggested that education for sustainability is focused on the development of (Ryan and Tilbury, 2011):

- students who are capable of envisioning alternative futures
- techniques for working collectively towards positive and democratic change
- participatory engagement to explore shared and divergent interests and needs
- challenges to the mind-sets and priorities that drive unsustainable development
- graduates who understand their professional responsibilities in this area.

22. What is your broad academic discipline?

- a. Please state the subject area(s) you have teaching responsibilities within:

23. Do you believe that we should be developing the sustainability literacy of our graduates?

Yes	
No	
Maybe	
Don't Know	
Comment	

24. How important is developing the 'sustainability literacy' of the students within your School? (Kagawa et. al, 2012).

Very important	
Important	
I do not know	
Unimportant	
Very unimportant	
Comment	

25. How relevant do you see your subject area in helping society move towards a more sustainable future?

Highly relevant	
Relevant	
Partially relevant	
Irrelevant	
Don't know	
Comments	

26. Please provide examples of how sustainability is included in curricula within your Faculty

27. Based on your experiences of including sustainability within the curriculum

a. What have been the main drivers?	
b. What has worked well?	
c. What have been the main challenges?	
d. What hasn't worked so well?	
e. What are the main opportunities going forwards?	

Curriculum Content and Pedagogical Approaches

This section attempts to gauge how your school includes sustainability in terms of curriculum content and pedagogical approaches.

28. Please list the modules that you teach on:

29. Below is an indicative list of curriculum entry points into sustainability. Please select the points that resonate well with your school's understanding of education for sustainability, select as many as appropriate (Kagawa et. al, 2012), (Ryan and Tilbury, 2011).

a) Accountability and ethics	
b) Alternative Futures	
c) Biological diversity	
d) Citizenship, democracy, governance	
e) Community resilience	
f) Consumerism and ethical trade	
g) Corporate social responsibility, business ethics	
h) Cultural diversity and equality	
i) Cultural heritage	
j) Ecosystems and ecological principles	
k) Education / educational theory	
l) Employability	

m) Food security	
n) Globalisation of trade	
o) Health and wellbeing	
p) Human rights	
q) Intercultural understanding	
r) Internationalisation	
s) Landscape	
t) Leadership and managing change	
u) Learning organisations and communities	
v) Millennium Development Goals	
w) Natural resources management	
x) Peace, security, conflict resolution	
y) Pollution	
z) Poverty	
aa) Quality Management, Environmental Management Systems	
bb) Responses to climate change	
cc) Rural and urban development	
dd) Social justice	
ee) Waste, Water, Energy	
ff) Other, please list	

30. Please select the pedagogical approaches you use within your lectures to help students learn about sustainability concepts /issues. Select as many as appropriate (Kagawa et. al, 2012).

a) Case study	
b) Extra-curricula/volunteer learning	
c) Field work	
d) Group/peer learning	
e) Guest speakers	
f) Interdisciplinarity/multidisciplinarity	
g) Lecture	
h) Outdoor/experiential learning	
i) Participatory/active learning	
j) Project-based learning	
k) Role play	
l) Work-based learning	
m) Problem based learning	
n) Not applicable	
o) Other, please list	

31. Are there any professional bodies or associations that are concerned with accrediting your programmes? (Kagawa et. al, 2012).

Yes	
No	
Don't Know	
Not applicable	

a. If yes, please list programmes and their accrediting bodies:

b. If yes please list those accrediting bodies where sustainability or sustainable development part of their remit or concern?

32. Is sustainability integrated into the learning and teaching strategy for:

	Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A	If yes please state School(s), Faculty(s), Programme(s)
a. Your Faculty					
b. Your School					
c. Your Programme					

33. The University is considering developing a 'One Planet' curriculum where 15% of the total student experience is delivered through a sustainability lens. Would this idea work for you discipline / programme?

Yes / no

Sustainability Lens

Delivering the student experience through a sustainability lens involves helping students take into account the environmental, economic and social dimensions surrounding the challenges we face in society and understand how this affects debates / thinking within their own subject area. Importantly, it encourages cross and interdisciplinary thinking, to recognise and analyse interconnections between systems. It also encourages an approach to decision making that:

- Embraces the long-term.
- Demands integration.
- Reduces complexity.
- Encourages joined-up thinking.
- Encourages active participation.

If yes:

Roughly what percentage of modules within your main programme do you feel sustainability could be embedded?

<10%	
10-25%	
26-50%	
51-90%	
>90%	
Programme Name:	

34. New opportunities:

- a. Please list any ideas you have for new sustainability:

- b. Please list any ideas you have for new sustainability programmes:

35. What do you consider to be the most important barriers to the inclusion of sustainability within your programme(s)? (Dawe et. al, 2003)

Please tick all that apply:

a) Lack of staff expertise	
b) Perceived irrelevance by staff	
c) Perceived irrelevance by students	
d) Insufficient time to update modules	
e) Perceived lack of academic rigour	
f) Financial restrictions	
g) Institutional structure	
h) Unclear what should be taught	
i) Lack of learning and teaching resources for sustainability within the subject discipline	
j) Not Applicable	
k) Don't Know	
l) Other	

36. What information would be useful to help you [further] integrate sustainability into your subject area?

37. Any other comments on sustainability literacy and the curriculum?

Section F: About you

This section is optional, however if it would help us significantly if you could provide your details so that we can contact you to take ideas and initiatives forwards.

All respondents filling in their contact details will be entered into a prize draw for £50 of book vouchers.

38. Name

39. Are you

Male

Female

40. Are you a member of academic staff or non-academic staff?

Academic Staff

Non-Academic Staff

41. Job Title

42. Within which Faculty /Department do you predominantly work in?

Within which School(s) do you work in? (select all that apply)

43. I would like to sign up to receive a sustainability newsletter:

Yes / no

If yes, please provide a contact email in question 48

44. I would like to contribute an article to a sustainability newsletter:

Yes / no

45. I would welcome the opportunity to join an informal group where sustainability issues can be discussed further:

Yes /no

46. I would like training / advice / further information on (tick all that apply):

	Training	Advice	Further information
a) General sustainability concepts			
b) Climate change			
c) Embedding education for sustainability within my subject area: Please state subject area:			
d) Embedding sustainability within my research interests: Please briefly state research area:			
e) Economic issues and sustainability			
f) Social issues and sustainability			
g) Individual and community wellbeing			
h) Sustainability of the university estate			

47. Are you happy for any of your additional written comments to be attributed to you in the report?

No

Yes

Yes, but I would like to see what is going to be used beforehand

If yes, please provide contact email in question 50

48. Would you be willing to take part in a more in-depth interview (by phone or face-to-face) with to discuss some of the issues arising from the study?

No

Yes

If yes, please enter your telephone number in question 49 below.

49. Telephone number

50. Email

51. As mentioned at the beginning of the survey any comments / suggestions on what it means to have sustainability as a core value and strategic priority would be very welcome. Please feel free to comment on anything you feel is relevant.

More info: Issues you may want to comment on:

Governance and Sustainability

For sustainability to be at the heart of the strategic vision for the newly transformed university, appropriate governance procedures will need to be in place. These will need to ensure that sustainability is incorporated into decision making at all levels and that stakeholders are easily able to see how the university is different as a result of having sustainability as a core value.

Links to other Agendas

There are opportunities for linking sustainability to other prominent agendas for universities such as employability, internationalisation, culture and lifelong learning and widening participation, see below for details:

Employability: there are opportunities to ensure students are equipped with the knowledge and skills for the rapidly growing green economy. Sustainability is on the agenda of many employers and the creative, interdisciplinary systems thinking that it encourages can also enhance students' employability attributes.

Internationalisation: many of the issues considered from a sustainable development perspective, such as climate change, are international issues that require coordinated global action. Therefore, incorporating an international dimension to subjects and valuing diversity can help students appreciate different cultures and develop their ability to operate in an international environment.

Culture: in the recognition that a change of culture will be needed to challenge ingrained assumptions and practices as well as the strong cultural commitment in Wales to bilingualism and heritage.

Lifelong learning and widening participation: the provision of lifelong learning and widening participation provides progression routes at all levels of people's lives through explicit relations with schools and colleges and professional frameworks.

Section G: Final page

Thank you for completing the survey. Your time and input is much appreciated.

References

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