

# QAA-HEA Education for Sustainable Development Guidance Document Consultation



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# HEA Education for Sustainable Development Guidance Document Consultation

- The Guidance is intended to assist staff in higher education institutions with the implementation of ESD in courses and across the curriculum.
- We wish to gain direct feedback, ideas, and suggestions for improvement from academics and students from across the higher education sector.
- This Guidance is not aimed solely at ESD experts. We are especially keen to hear the views of discipline specialists who may be asked to introduce ESD into their curriculum.

# The Guidance

- This guidance has been prepared by representatives of the higher education community with expertise in education and sustainable development.
- It has been led by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

# The Guidance

- The guidance is intended to be useful to higher education practitioners who plan to offer students the chance to think and learn about sustainable development as an element of their higher education experience. The guidance acknowledges that there are many ways in which this may be achieved and is not prescriptive about delivery.
- Instead it offers an outcomes-based framework, and general guidance on approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, which those with responsibility for designing and delivering programmes of study may find helpful. The guidance is intended to be relevant to educators in all disciplines wishing to embed or include learning about sustainable development across their curricula. It also includes signposts to additional information and resources.

# The Guidance

- This guidance is not part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), but is intended to complement it. The Quality Code sets out the expectations that all providers of UK higher education are required to meet and is used explicitly as a part of QAA review processes. From time to time, QAA publishes guidance to complement the Quality Code, intended to be of practical use to educators who are concerned with particular themes or aspects of the educational experience. The Guidance is intended to serve an enhancement function.

# The Guidance

- There are two main strands to this guidance:
- The identification of graduate outcomes - what students will be able to know, do and understand after a period of learning covered by this guidance.
- Guidance on teaching, learning and assessment - the ways in which educators can enable students to achieve and demonstrate the graduate outcomes.

# The Guidance

- The guidance is not prescriptive about how education for sustainable development should be delivered, recognising that educators will be working within different local contexts, governed in some cases by broader institutional strategies.
- The guidance on teaching, learning and assessment includes indicative examples and educators are encouraged to use the 'Resources' section as a source of further information and advice.

# The Guidance

- Introduction
- Does this frame the guidance appropriately?
- Definitions
- Are these clear, ambiguous, contestable OK?
- Meeting expectations about ESD in higher education
- Are these identified and covered in sufficient detail?
- The nature of education for sustainable development
- Is this a description you recognise?



# The Guidance

## Graduate outcomes

- Knowledge and understanding
- Contextual understanding
- Natural systems and their limits
- Structures and societies
- Does this cover the key areas? What is missing?

## Skills

- Critical skills
- Putting theory into action
- Negotiation
- Attributes
- Does this cover the key areas? What is missing?

# The Guidance

## Teaching, learning and assessment

This section provides guidance on the types of teaching, learning and assessment that can help students to achieve, and demonstrate achievement of, the graduate outcomes identified in the previous section

- Approaches to teaching and learning
- The following are identified as being particularly useful T & L examples
- Case studies
- Stimulus activities
- Simulation
- Experiential project work
- Place-based learning
- Is anything missing? Does anything require more detail or further contextualisation?

# The Guidance

- More 'traditional' pedagogies
- Approaches to assessment
- Strategic assessment themes
- The learning environment
- Questions that educators may ask
- Are these sections clear? Unambiguous?  
Providing sufficient detail?
- Resources
- Are important resources overlooked?

# KEY CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. Does it adequately reflect and describe the outcomes expected of graduates after a period of learning covered by this guidance?
2. Does the information in the introductory sections successfully describe the nature of ESD and its defining principles? If not, what additional aspects might be included, excluded or elaborated?
3. Does the section on the nature of ESD adequately describe the core aspects of ESD?
4. Are there any areas that should be included to reflect newly evolving expectations about higher education?
5. Does the section relating to teaching, learning and assessment cover adequately the ways in which an educator can enable students to achieve and demonstrate the graduate outcomes?
6. Does the section on teaching, learning and assessment provide an appropriate indication of the types of teaching and assessment relevant to ESD?

# KEY CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

7. Is the document in its current guise and content likely to engage academic and student colleagues who are not currently interested in ESD?
8. Is the tone of the document likely to encourage colleagues to read and engage with the content, or is it likely to deter them?
9. Should the guidance document address 'behaviours' or only learning?
10. Should the 'teaching, learning and assessment' section include examples in an attempt to help newcomers to ESD?
11. Is the overall document balanced in terms of addressing the social, economic and environmental aspects of ESD?

# Next steps

- This is your chance to critique and comment on the Guidance.
- We ask you to help us shape the next iteration so that it is the most useful document we can collectively create.
- We welcome your comments on any aspect of the guidance.

# Consultation Summary

- Are these the right issues to cover
- What is missing?
- Is the balance and emphasis correct?
- Are the definitions clear?
- Should there be more or less use of examples?
- Are the suggested resources appropriate, targeted and accessible?

# The Consultation

- The Consultation will last 8 weeks.
- A circular letter will go from QAA to all universities and other providers of higher education (including FECs), representative bodies, subject associations, announcing that the consultation is open. The letter will include a link to the on-line consultation on the QAA's website which will feature the draft document.
- <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/>
- The expert group will review the responses in early January and draft the final document.
- The Guidance will be published early in 2014.



# Further Information

- If you would like further information relating to the draft guidance or the process followed in its development, please contact
- Dr Laura Bellingham ([l.bellingham@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:l.bellingham@qaa.ac.uk))
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