

Responsible Futures/Education for Sustainable Development Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Responsible Futures/Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Group is the organising body of the ESD Community of Practice. The Group leads on participation in [Responsible Futures](#), an external ESD framework and accreditation mark that facilitates a close working partnership between the University and Students' Union.

Terms of Reference

The Responsible Futures/ESD Group is responsible for overseeing the ESD Community of Practice and participation in Responsible Futures, including achieving and maintaining Responsible Futures accreditation. This involves the development, implementation and monitoring of the University's strategic approaches to ESD and includes the following responsibilities:

- Responsible Futures accreditation – determine which criteria are already being met and which should be prioritised for further action. Members will support the implementation and monitoring of criteria, supply evidence and participate in accreditation audits where required. See appendix A for the Responsible Futures criteria.
- ESD strategy – develop and implement a strategic approach and SMART action plan for ESD.
- Defining ESD – members will support consultation with staff and students to develop an institutional ESD vision and framework of quality and meaningful ESD.
- Curriculum mapping – members will support curriculum reviews/audits that determine the prevalence and quality of ESD.
- ESD Champions – members will act as an ESD Champion within their own department. They will share information with colleagues relating to ESD, encourage them to embed ESD into their practice and bring colleagues' questions and ideas to the Group. They will also communicate, build advocacy, and champion ESD beyond their own department.
- Sharing good practice – members will promote the [ESD Community of Practice](#) and support the development of case studies of current good practice, bringing examples from within their own department to the Group.
- Quality processes – work to embed ESD into programme review and approval, and other relevant quality processes.
- Staff development – members will support embedding ESD into current staff development programmes and the creation of ESD specific staff development.
- Events – members will promote and suggest ideas for ESD related events for students and staff and support/lead on delivery where appropriate.
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – ensure that sustainable development is explored through a decolonial and justice driven lens and that ESD work doesn't perpetuate colonialist approaches. Members will identify and facilitate links between ESD and EDI where relevant, particularly decolonising the curriculum.
- Inter-disciplinary working – members will support the development of inter-disciplinary events, programmes, research etc. relating to sustainability, including opportunities for [Living Labs](#).
- Wider sustainability – members will embed ESD and wider sustainability thinking across the University, including strategies, processes and procedures for areas such as procurement.
- Oversight of ESD - monitoring, reviewing and reporting of ESD activities at UoS.
- The activities of the Working Group will support other initiatives such as PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education).

Document Ref :	Author :	Version No. And Date :
Responsible Futures/ESD Group Terms of Reference	N Mowl, Education for Sustainable Development Manager	V1.0 October 2025

Governance arrangements

- Meetings will be facilitated by the Sustainability Office.
- The ESD Working Group is a sub-group of the University Sustainability Board and also reports into the Students' Union Board of Trustees.
- An ESD Working Group Teams site will allow for sharing of information and gaining feedback in between meetings.

Minimum membership:

- Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor Education & Student Experience
- Education for Sustainable Development Manager
- Sustainability Engagement Officer
- Graduate Sustainability Communications and Engagement Officer
- SU staff member representative
- SU Student Officer representative
- 1 Student ESD Champions (paid)
- 2 School of Arts, Media and Creative Technology Representatives
- 2 School of Science, Engineering and Environment Representatives
- 2 School of Health and Society Representatives
- 2 Salford Business School Representatives
- 2 Library, Careers & Enterprise Representatives
- Learning and Teaching Enhancement Centre Representative
- Quality Management Office Representative
- Research and Knowledge Exchange Representative
- University and College Union Representative

Document Ref :	Author :	Version No. And Date :
Responsible Futures/ESD Group Terms of Reference	N Mowl, Education for Sustainable Development Manager	V1.0 October 2025

Appendix A – Responsible Futures criteria

Where ‘issues related to Responsible Futures’ is mentioned in a criterion, this means ESD and related themes. The majority of criteria relate to the formal curriculum (courses and programmes), but some relate to the informal (extra-curricular/community activities) and subliminal (organisational policies, practices and operations) curricula.

We joined the programme in September 2023 and following at least two years of participation we will be audited by a team of students, who will be trained and supported by SOS-UK. There are 9 compulsory criteria to complete (shown in bold) and 41 others that we can choose from. We need to achieve a certain number of points (currently 220) to achieve Responsible Futures accreditation, which then remains valid for two years.

Full details of all criteria, including potential points, further information and details of how we will be audited, can be viewed by registering on the [Responsible Futures website](#) and joining the ‘University of Salford and USSU’ team.

Baselines and benchmarks

- **BB001) Within the last two years, the Partnership has completed an institution-wide survey of students on their attitudes towards, expectations on sustainability and published the findings.**
- BB002) The Partnership has completed a follow-up to the survey conducted in BB001 and published the findings.
- BB003) Within the last five years, the Partnership has carried out a thorough baseline curriculum review or audit on sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development and published the findings.
- BB004) The Partnership has completed a follow-up curriculum review or audit conducted in BB003 on sustainability and published the findings.
- BB005) The Partnership routinely asks students about sustainability in evaluation surveys.
- BB006) Within the last two years, the Partnership has developed an understanding of teaching staff's knowledge and confidence with sustainability at the institution and informed their practices with these findings.
- BB007) The Partnership has completed a follow-up survey to the survey conducted in BB006 and published the findings.

Partnership and planning

- **PPL001) The Partnership has a working or coordinating group that leads on sustainability.**
- **PPL002) The Partnership has a SMART action plan progressing actions for issues related to Responsible Futures.**
- PPL003) Within the current academic year, the Partnership has proactively engaged key stakeholder groups in the issues related to Responsible Futures.

Leadership & strategy

- **LS001) The Partnership has gained the support of a high-level champion within both the students' union and institution for their efforts to attain Responsible Futures accreditation.**
- LS002) The Partnership has gained the support of their trustees and/or governors within both the students' union and institution on the issues related to Responsible Futures and their efforts to achieve accreditation.

Document Ref :	Author :	Version No. And Date :
Responsible Futures/ESD Group Terms of Reference	N Mowl, Education for Sustainable Development Manager	V1.0 October 2025

- LS003) The Partnership has developed a statement on sustainability through a consultative process that defines what it means to the institution in relation to its educational purpose and values.
- LS004) The institution's overall strategic plan and/or the publicly-stated learning outcomes include supportive references to whole-institution engagement with sustainability.
- **LS005) The institution's learning and teaching strategy, academic strategy, or equivalent, includes supportive references to issues related to Responsible Futures, or it will do after the next review.**
- LS006) The institution and students' union have whole institution/SU holistic sustainability strategies (or equivalent).
- LS007) The institution and students' union's marketing and communications teams (or equivalent) are fully engaged with and supportive of the partnership's sustainability work.

Policy and commitment

- **POC001) The institution has provided professional development and dedicated support for relevant personnel on the issues related to Responsible Futures.**
- POC002) The students' union has formally passed and publicised a policy commitment to embedding sustainability in the formal and informal curriculum.
- POC003) One or more named elected student officer has agreed to lead on sustainability issues for the students' union this academic year.
- POC004) At least one member of staff in the students' union has responsibility for sustainability.
- POC005) The Partnership has made sufficient staff or student resource available to substantively progress the issues related to Responsible Futures.
- POC006) The Partnership has made effective use of the relevant quality framework and/or outcome agreements to progress the issues related to Responsible Futures.
- POC007) The Partnership has embedded the issues related to Responsible Futures into their human resource, induction, and training processes for all types of new starters (students, sabbatical officers, staff, governors, etc.).
- POC008) The Partnership has worked with the institution's student recruitment and/or widening participation department(s) to incorporate issues relating to sustainability into their work.
- POC009) The partnership's careers team have committed to promoting careers, internships and placements that incorporate sustainability, and/or supporting students to take sustainability values into any future career or career decisions.
- POC010) The partnership's careers team have committed to disengaging with harmful industries (e.g. fossil fuel companies and arms companies), for example through job fairs at the institution.

Interventions

- **IN001) Within the current academic year, the Partnership has run one or more internal event bringing together staff and students on the issues related to Responsible Futures.**
- IN002) Within the last five years, the Partnership has taken part in, or is booked onto, an external change programme on the issues related to Responsible Futures.
- IN003) Within the current academic year, the institution has made funding, or related resources, available to staff and students so that they can develop their own projects that support the aims of Responsible Futures.
- IN004) During the last 12 months, four or more schools or departments have integrated innovative pedagogical approaches to their sustainability teaching, learning, and assessment.

Document Ref :	Author :	Version No. And Date :
Responsible Futures/ESD Group Terms of Reference	N Mowl, Education for Sustainable Development Manager	V1.0 October 2025

- IN005) The institution's non-academic and research/academic teams routinely collaborate to create educational and/or research opportunities through their sustainability-related work. Some institutions would call this a Living Lab approach.
- IN006) Within the current academic year, the Partnership has actively made use of student coursework and/or dissertations.
- IN007) There are wide reaching structured interdisciplinary experiences, linked to the issues related to Responsible Futures, through the formal curriculum for students across the institution.
- **IN008) There are good levels of informal curriculum activity that support the aims of Responsible Futures.**
- IN009) There is demonstrable positive progress in embedding sustainability across the subliminal curriculum.
- IN010) Within the last 1-3 years, there have been opportunities for students to co-create teaching, learning and/or assessment approaches or content in the formal curriculum with their educators.

Impacts and outcomes

- **IO001) The Partnership has reflected on and identified demonstrable positive progress in embedding sustainability across the formal curriculum.**
- IO002) The Partnership has reflected on and identified demonstrable positive progress in relation to its institution-wide collaborative approach.
- IO003) The Partnership has reflected on and identified their short-term impacts and outcomes in relation to positive outcomes for students.
- IO004) The Partnership has reflected on and identified their long-term impacts and outcomes in relation to positive outcomes for students.
- IO005) The Partnership has reflected on and identified their impacts and outcomes in relation to positive outcomes for staff.

Outreach

- OU001) The Partnership has embedded the issues related to Responsible Futures into their community outreach activities.
- OU002) Within the last two years, the Partnership has proactively engaged one or more students' union or educational institution on the issues related to Responsible Futures.
- OU003) Within the last two years, the Partnership has presented on their work relating to the Responsible Futures agenda at a sector event.
- OU004) The Partnership has published case studies highlighting sustainability-related achievements, impacts and outcomes.
- OU005) Within the last two years, the Partnership has sought out opportunities to learn from a range of educational institutions on how to progress sustainability in learning.

Document Ref :	Author :	Version No. And Date :
Responsible Futures/ESD Group Terms of Reference	N Mowl, Education for Sustainable Development Manager	V1.0 October 2025

Appendix B – ESD guidance and further information

- University of Salford [sustainability website](#).
- University of Salford [ESD resources Padlet](#).
- The University of Salford has full membership of the [EAUC](#), The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education. Staff and students can join for free: [Join EAUC](#).
- 2021 Advance HE QAA '[Education for sustainable development: Guidance for UK higher education providers](#)'.
- United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs/Global Goals).
- QAA collaborative enhancement project '[Students Driving Curriculum Quality in Sustainability](#)'. Included development of the [anti-greenwash education kit](#) and [website](#).
- QAA collaborative enhancement project '[Monitoring and evaluating education for sustainable development in Higher Education](#)'.
- QAA collaborative enhancement project '[ESD and academic quality](#)'
- UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development website, including [ESD: A Roadmap](#), [ESD Goals: Learning Objectives](#) and [Issues and trends in ESD](#).

Document Ref :	Author :	Version No. And Date :
Responsible Futures/ESD Group Terms of Reference	N Mowl, Education for Sustainable Development Manager	V1.0 October 2025