

# IAU Global Survey on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development (HESD) 2026

*Survey Questionnaire for preparation and data collection only*

*Please note that this document is for internal consultation at the institutions taking part in the survey only. Responses need to be submitted in the survey tool (lime survey). This document is also available in [FRENCH](#) and [SPANISH](#). All versions, links and updates on the survey can be found [here](#).*

## Higher Education as a catalyst for sustainable transformations

### Information about the survey

[Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development \(HESD\)](#) is one of the key priority areas of work of the [International Association of Universities \(IAU\)](#). The IAU supports universities and other higher education institutions (HEIs) in education, research, community engagement, and campus transformation to contribute to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as set out in [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and aligned with UNESCO's [ESD for 2030 Roadmap](#).

This survey is the fourth edition of the IAU Global Survey on HESD, following [previous surveys published in 2017, 2020, and 2023](#). These surveys have contributed significantly to understanding how HEIs worldwide engage with sustainable development.

Taking a whole-institution perspective, this survey explores how HEIs integrate sustainable development into their activities, and identifies key institutional actors involved. The findings will support HEIs in strengthening their engagement with sustainable development and help advocate for the role of higher education for the 2030 Agenda and beyond, at national and global levels.

### Survey Results

The data gathered through the [4th IAU Global Survey on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development \(HESD\)](#) will be analysed and presented in a **comprehensive outcomes report** prepared by the IAU. The report will be made available to the global higher education community in January 2027 via Open Access and will also support further analysis by IAU partners.

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Initial findings will be presented at key global moments, including the **UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)** in New York City, USA in July 2026 and the **IAU 17th General Conference**, at Murdoch University in Perth, Australia, in November 2026.

In addition, the survey results will help inform and strengthen the [IAU Portal on Higher Education and Sustainable Development \(HESD\)](#) and support knowledge-sharing and institutional learning worldwide.

## Survey Participation

The IAU Global Survey on HESD seeks **institutional responses**, not individual perspectives. Only **one coordinated response per institution** will be counted.

To ensure the response accurately reflects institutional policies, practices, and priorities, we strongly encourage institutions to treat the survey as a **consultative process**. This may include internal discussions and input from relevant stakeholders before completing the questionnaire.

Ideally, the survey response should be submitted by a person with a **key leadership or coordination role**, such as:

- President / Rector
- Provost / Vice-President
- Vice-President or Director for Sustainability
- Sustainability Advisor or equivalent
- or a designated representative acting on behalf of the institutional leadership

When possible, institutions are also encouraged to **consult with student representatives** (e.g. Green Offices, Student Unions, sustainability student groups) as part of this process.

## Preparing your Institutional Response

- The survey takes approximately **30 minutes** to complete once information is collected.
- It is possible to **pause and resume** the survey at any time (*by clicking the option 'save and resume' in the top right corner and adding your email and password*).
- To support internal consultation, this document serves as a **preview of the questionnaire**.

We **strongly recommend** reviewing the questionnaire in advance and consulting with relevant colleagues and stakeholders before submitting the final institutional response.

→ **Deadline for submissions 30th April 2026.**

→ [Click here](#) to submit the responses in the survey tool.

The survey has been developed thanks to the generous support and expertise of:

- **Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur (ARES)**
- **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)**
- **Association of African Universities (AAU)**
- **Association of Arab Universities (AARU)**
- **Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU)**
- **Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (*Conferencia de Rectores de las Universidades Españolas*) (CRUE)**
- **European University Association (EUA)**
- **German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*) (HRK)**
- **Global Student Forum (GSF)**
- **Qatar Foundation (QF)**
- **Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS)**
- **Unión de Universidades de América Latina y el Caribe (UDUALC)**

**Contact:** Isabel Toman, Senior Programme Officer HESD, International Association of Universities (IAU) [hesd@iau.global](mailto:hesd@iau.global)

*Questions marked with an \* are mandatory and **cannot be skipped**.*

## Background information

*Thank you for taking this survey. Please provide us with some background information*

**1. \*Terms of data use:** *(please tick the box to agree)*

a) IAU and partners listed may use the data entered for research, presentations, and publications. Personal data will not be shared with any third party nor be sold. It may appear in aggregated form or as examples as part of the data analysis by IAU or survey partners, treated anonymously.

b) I understand that my name and email will not be part of the data analyzed or shared with partners, and will only be used in order to communicate the results of the survey.

**2. \*Name of higher education institution (HEI):**

*University of Worcester*

**3. \*In which country is your institution located?**

*United Kingdom.*

**4. \*Type of institution** *(please select one)*

- **Public**
- Private-not-for-profit
- Private-for-profit
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**5. \*Position of the respondent of the survey** *(please select one)*

- Head of institution *(President, Rector, Vice-Chancellor, etc.)*
  - **Leadership level** *(Director, Vice President, Head of Department, etc.)*
  - Academic staff *(professors, researchers, etc.)*
  - Administrative staff
  - Student\* *(please only continue to fill in this survey if you are mandated to do so and after consultation with the leadership of your university – see introduction)*
  - Other *(please specify)*
- \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Did you consult with others at your institution to complete this questionnaire? Please select one

- Yes, I consulted others.
- No, I did not consult others.

6.1 (if yes) Please indicate whom you have consulted:

Please select all that apply (multiple choice).

- Head of institution (President, Rector, Vice-Chancellor, etc.)
- Leadership level (Director, Vice President, Head of Department, etc.)
- Academic staff (professors, researchers, etc.)
- Administrative staff
- Student
- Other (please specify):  
\_\_\_\_\_

6.2. (if no) Please comment on why you did not consult others:

Open Response

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7. Please leave your email in case of questions on your reply to this survey.

This can help us contact you in case of questions regarding the input you provided, and to share the survey report once published.

[j.wilson@worc.ac.uk](mailto:j.wilson@worc.ac.uk)

## SDGs and the Whole Institution Approach

*This section aims to explore how your institution works with a whole-institution approach (WIA). According to UNESCO and the IAU, a WIA is “involving the entire institution and all departments or units, its staff and its students working together to create a sustainable institution, making it a microcosm of a sustainable society by practicing what it teaches”. (UNESCO 2018 ESD Guidebook)*

**8. \*Which concepts/terms are most referred to in SD activities at your institution?**

*Please choose between 2-5 of the below options, and rank them by importance (1=most important, 5=least important).*

- **Sustainable Development 1**
- **The UN 2030 Agenda and SDGs 3**
- **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) 2**
- Global Citizenship Education
- **Climate Change Education 4**
- **Sustainability Education 5**
- Environmental Education
- Greening
- Other

**9. (optional) If you use or work with other concepts not listed before, you can list them here:**

*Open Response*

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**10. \*Which units are formerly overseeing and reporting on sustainability activities at your institution?**

*Please select all that apply (multiple choice).*

- **Leadership level (president's office, provost, chancellor etc.)**
- **Sustainability office or SD department**
- International office
- **Faculty or department**
- **Student organizations/associations**

**11. \*Which units are actively engaged in sustainability activities at your institution?**

*Please select all that apply (multiple choice).*

- **Leadership level (director, vice president, head of department, etc.)**

- Faculty or departmental level
- Academic staff (professors, researchers, etc.)
- Administrative staff
- Sustainability office
- Student organizations/associations
- Individual advocates

12. \*In which areas does your institution engage with sustainable development? Please select all that apply (multiple choice).

- Teaching and learning
- Research
- Community engagement
- Campus operations (*single and multiple campuses*)
- Vision and mission
- Unknown
- None
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13. Statement on Student engagement in decision-making processes

Please check one per statement.

Statement	Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree
At my institution, students are encouraged and supported to take part in important decisions.	(Respondents to click one of 5 boxes in each line) <b>Strongly agree</b>
Students are highly engaged in decision-making processes at my institution.	<b>Strongly agree</b>

14. At which level are students involved in decision-making processes regarding sustainable development at your institution?

Please select all that apply (multiple choice).

- Student council
- Advisory groups
- Faculty/ departmental student representatives
- Governing board
- Green office or other collective structure
- Project-based involvement

- Not involved at any level
- Other (please specify)

**15. What actions do you believe are needed to meaningfully engage students in co-creating change at the institution?**

*Please select all that apply (multiple choice).*

- **Provide funding/ resources for student-led sustainability initiatives (clubs, associations, campaigns, etc.)**
- **Develop participatory governance structures**
- **Collect and use student feedback and input**
- **Integrate SD through competence-based curricular**
- **Action-oriented and transformative pedagogies**
- **Inclusive learning environments**
- Other/further comments: *open response* \_\_\_\_\_

**16. \*Which of the following challenges have made the implementation of SD activities (including plans and strategies, if any) more difficult at your institution?**

*Please choose between 2-5 of the below options, and rank them by importance (1=most important, 5=least important).*

- Lack of training opportunities
- Lack of initiatives
- Lack of interest among staff/students
- Lack of knowledge
- **Lack of staff 1**
- Lack of research cooperation
- Lack of cooperation with other institutions, community organizations and/or companies
- Lack of leadership support
- Lack of institutional recognition of engagement for SD
- **Lack of funding 2**
- Lack of cohesion of SD initiatives across the institution ('silos')
- Lack of external support through national guidelines, policies or similar

**16.1 If other challenges are not listed above, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_**

**17. \*What are the opportunities that are currently or have in the past supported the implementation of actions towards sustainable development?**

*Please choose between 2-5 of the below options, and rank them by importance (1=most important, 5=least important).*

- **Training opportunities 2**
- New engaging initiatives
- High interest /motivation
- New knowledge development
- **Dedicated staff 3**
- **SD promoted research cooperation opportunities 5**
- **New or existing cooperation with other institutions, community organizations and/or companies 4**
- **Leadership support 1**
- Institutional recognition (reward mechanisms; etc)
- Dedicated funding
- External support through national guidelines, policies or similar

17.1 If other opportunities are not listed above, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**18. \*To what extent has the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in 2015 increased interest in sustainable development at your institution?**

*Please choose one option.*

- very little
- some extent
- **great extent**
- Unknown

**19. Is your institution planning to keep using the SDGs as a framework in the years to come/beyond 2030?**

*Please choose one option.*

- **Yes, even if the UN replaces the SDGs with a new framework.**
- Yes, but only if the UN continues the SDGs.
- No, even if the UN continues the SDGs.
- Other (*please specify*)

**20. Which of the following options would be most helpful for your institution to advance your work in ESD beyond 2030?**

*Please choose one option.*

- **UN continue the SDGs after 2030.**
- UN replace the SDGs with a new framework after 2030.
- Other (*please specify*)

## Organization and Governance

*To reach the goals, set by the 2030 Agenda, institutions are increasingly integrating sustainability, SD, and the SDGs framework into their institutional strategies, policies, and governance structures. This section aims at collecting information on mechanisms for governance in place and good practices.*

**21. \*How is sustainable development currently addressed at the strategy level?**

*For example: Sustainability Strategy, Institutional Strategy, Vision and Mission, Environmental strategy*  
*Please choose one option.*

- **Embedded in overall strategy**
- A specific strategy targeting SD
- As part of a sub-strategic plan
- Currently being developed
- Not addressed at this level
- Unknown

**22. \*How are sustainability activities assessed/monitored and/or evaluated?**

*Please select all that apply (multiple choice).*

- **Using standardized reporting or measurement frameworks (institutional, national or global)**
- **Conducting audits, reviews, or external evaluations**
- **Gathering feedback from different stakeholders (e.g. surveys)**
- **Evaluating the results of specific projects**
- **Preparing periodic sustainability reports**
- Not assessed/ monitored and/or evaluated

**21.1 If monitoring takes place, please specify in what form**

*Please select all that apply (multiple choice).*

- **Reporting to leadership**
- **Annual public report**
- **Surveys of staff by university/ leadership/ administration**
- **Working groups (monitoring, follow up)**
- **External rankings (national or global)**
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**23. Is there a specific budget for sustainability/ESD and related activities?**

*Please choose one option.*

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Unknown**

**24. (if yes) Has the budget changed in the last 5 years?**

*Please choose one option.*

- **Increased**
- **Decreased**
- **Stayed approximately the same**

**25. In which of the following ways are internationalization and sustainable development linked at your institution?**

*Please choose one option.*

- There is no explicit link between internationalization and sustainability initiatives/strategy
- Internationalization policies and activities take into account climate action and environmental protection
- **Internationalization activities are linked to sustainability initiatives (also beyond climate action) but there is not an overall strategy to link the two**
- The institution has a policy/strategy to use Internationalization as a means for the institution to support sustainable development
- Not applicable

**26. Please include a link to your (SD) strategy or similar document – these will be listed in the annex of the survey report**

*Open Response*

<https://www.worcester.ac.uk/documents/sustainability-strategy-2030.pdf>

**27. Please share examples of current practices adopted in relation to sustainable development at your HEI:**

<https://www.worcester.ac.uk/about/sustainability/>

## Teaching, Learning and Research

*Integrating sustainability in teaching and learning and research is of importance for the acquisition of SD knowledge, competences, and skills. In this section, we would like to collect information on good practices developed at your institution.*

*Higher education institutions have a crucial role in addressing all of the SDGs. Please use this section to tell us how and on which SDGs your institution is engaging.*

**28. \*Does your institution offer courses specifically focused on sustainable development?**

*Please choose one option.*

- **Yes (please specify):**
  - <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/courses/environmental-management-and-sustainability-bsc-hons?option=c82dd3d6-7b7c-55bb-a0ce-831919e7c668>
  - <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/courses/global-sustainable-management-msc>
- No
- Unknown

**29. \*When reflecting upon how ESD is implemented at your institution, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

*Please check one per statement.*

ESD has changed ...	Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree X                    X                    X                    X                    X
... the ways in which we assess and grade students.	<i>Neutral</i>
... the topics we teach and what we want students to learn	Agree
... the teaching approaches we use	Agree
... the experts we involve in our education	Agree
... the physical learning environment	Agree
... how different disciplines work together	Agree
...research foci	Strongly agree

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...how sustainability is integrated across institutional governance, campus operations, academic	Strongly agree
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activities, and community engagement.	
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**30. \*Please rank in which thematic areas your institution is mainly engaging with the SDGs.**

*Please choose between 2-5 of the below options, and rank them by importance (1=most important, 5=least important).*

- **Teaching and learning 1**
- **Research and innovation 2**
- **Community engagement 4**
- **Student engagement 3**
- **Campus initiatives, 5**
- Partnerships and outreach
- Institutional governance

**31. Please highlight up to 3 examples of SDG activities at your institution (please include a link to the project website where possible):**

<https://www.worcester.ac.uk/about/sustainability/how-to-get-involved/sustainability-forum.aspx>

<https://susthingsout.com/student-sustainability-hub/>

<https://susthingsout.com/>

**32. How does your institution perceive the connection between artificial intelligence (AI) and sustainability?**

*Please choose one option.*

- The connection between AI and sustainability is recognized.
- AI and sustainability are viewed as separate focus areas.
- **AI offers potential benefits for sustainability.**
- AI is seen as a potential hindrance to sustainability.
- The institution has not yet considered the connection between AI and sustainability.

## Collaboration and Partnerships

*Regional and global collaboration among universities enables the sharing of good practices and the development of joint teaching and research initiatives.*

**33. \*Is your institution partnering with other higher education institutions on sustainable development related themes?**

*Please choose one option.*

- Yes
- No

**34. If yes, please specify at which level**

*Please select all that apply (multiple choice).*

- Local level
- National level
- Regional level
- Global Level
- **All of the above**

**35. \*In which of the following HESD specific and other HE networks (activities) with special focus on SD is your institution involved?**

*Please select all that apply (multiple choice).*

- AASHE - Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
- ACU - Association of Commonwealth Universities
- ASEF – Asia-Europe Foundation
- AUF - Agence universitaire de la Francophonie
- **Copernicus Alliance**
- CRUE - Universidades Españolas
- **EAUC - The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges**
- EASG - Education and Academia Stakeholder Group
- EUA - European University Association
- HESI - Higher Education Sustainability Initiative
- IAU HESD Global Cluster
- ISCN - International Sustainable Campus Network
- SDSN - Sustainable Development Solutions Network
- **Signatory of the SDG Accord**
- **SOS UK/Responsible Futures (International or UK)**
- UNAI Hubs
- UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs network
- UNITAR - Universities Global Coalition
- UNU-RCE – United Nations University Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for

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Sustainable Development

- None
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**36. \*Is your institution engaged with public actors (e.g. government, public organizations) on sustainability projects?**

*Please choose one option.*

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

**37. If you answered yes in the previous question, please specify**

\_\_\_\_\_ Local Government, NHS, Police \_\_\_\_\_

**38. \*What kind of national policy instruments impact your institution when it comes to engaging with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs?**

*Please select all that apply (multiple choice).*

- Regulations (legal obligations, accreditation requirements, audits, non-binding policy statements)
- Incentives (funding incentives, reputational tools e.g. national ranking, labels, awards)
- Capacity development tools (special units advising, tools for self-assessment, optional institutional reviews, guidelines)
- Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**39. \*Is your institution engaged with private actors (businesses and/or companies) on sustainability projects?**

*Please choose one option.*

- Yes
- No
- Unknown
- Other (please specify)

**If you answered yes in the previous question, please specify**

\_\_\_\_\_ Local SMEs (through annual behaviour change week, through procurement) \_\_\_\_\_

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**40. \*Is your institution engaged with other stakeholders on sustainable development?**

*Please select all that apply (multiple choice).*

- **Schools**
  - **NGOs**
  - **Community organizations**
  - Others, please specify:
- 

**41. If your institution could do anything to take (more) action for sustainability and the 2030 Agenda, what would it be?**

*More student projects with local SMEs to support sustainability transitions, more cross-disciplinary sustainability working (teaching/research)*

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## IAU and HESD

*The IAU and its partners have been active in the field of sustainable development since the early 1990s. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and the increased focus on sustainable development, we want to enhance our work in the field and ensure that it provides relevant support to Members.*

### 42. Please indicate the level of interest (highly interested, interested, neutral, not interested) for the following working areas:

- Advocacy & Analysis (research, publications and policy statements on higher education and research on sustainable development) **Interested**
- Building synergies & Networking (capacity building, leadership training, and networking services) **Interested**
- Communicating & Convening (international conference) **Neutral.**

### 43. Could you indicate contact points / focal points of individuals in charge of fostering sustainable development principles and practices in your institution?

*These contacts will not be made public. The IAU will use any contacts provided only for further consultation and to better map how SD is being embedded at the HEI level*

*The URL links may help inform the IAU Global Portal on HESD and help share and scale up policy and action*

- Name of unit (if applicable): **Sustainability Department**
- Homepage URL(s): <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/about/sustainability/>
- Position of contact person(s): Director of Sustainability, Academic Lead for Sustainability
- Email of contact person(s): [k.boom@worc.ac.uk](mailto:k.boom@worc.ac.uk) , [h.barrett@worc.ac.uk](mailto:h.barrett@worc.ac.uk)
- Other information

### 44. Would your institution like to know more about how to embed sustainable development in any of the above areas? If so, please let us know which areas (e.g. teacher training, research, campus).

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### 45. Do you know about the IAU Global Portal on HESD? *If you are not yet on the portal and you would like your initiatives to be added, please fill out this form.*

- Yes, I am using it.
- **Yes, but I don't use it.**
- No

**46. Please help us identify how the IAU can assist you in your work on higher education and research for sustainable development:**

- **Development / sharing of guidance documents**
- Surveys
- Publications
- Webinars
- Seminars and workshops
- Conferences
- **Networking with experts and peers**
- Advocacy - to governments and key agencies (national governments, UNESCO, UN)
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of the IAU and partners, thank you for taking this survey

*Your feedback is much appreciated. Our collective aim is to support the higher education community better in the future. If you have any further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us ([hesd@iau.global](mailto:hesd@iau.global)).*

**47. If you have any feedback on the survey or other comments, please let us know.**

\_\_\_\_\_