

Responsible Futures Feedback Report

**A confidential report for
Canterbury Christ Church
University & Students' Union**

22 October 2019

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Overview

Education for sustainable development is the process of equipping students with the **knowledge and understanding, skills** and **attributes** needed to work and live in a way that safeguards environmental, social and economic wellbeing, both in the present and for future generations.

QAA ESD guidance 2014

1.0 Introduction

Contacts:

Responsible Futures

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NUS Department for Sustainability

Website: www.nus.org.uk/sustainability

Email: sustainability@nus.org.uk

The NUS logo consists of the lowercase letters 'nus' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter 'u' is partially enclosed by a blue rectangular shape that extends to the right.The Responsible Futures logo features the words 'Responsible' and 'Futures' stacked vertically in a white, serif font. This text is set against a blue rectangular background that has a black shadow effect on its right side.

Responsible Futures is certification of a whole institution's commitment to social responsibility and environmental sustainability, and having an enabling environment for it to thrive, rather than an endpoint.

1.1 Responsible Futures

Responsible Futures is a whole-institution approach to embedding social responsibility and sustainability across the formal and informal curriculum across both HE and FE. It is a supported change programme and accreditation mark that works to put sustainability at the heart of education.

The framework facilitates a close working partnership between students' unions and their institutions and was with significant guidance from an advisory group made up of representatives from the EAUC, People and Planet, UCU, SOCENV, HEA, AOC, Learning for Sustainability Scotland, and the Knowledge Transfer Network, as well as individual institutions and students' unions. The criteria represent best practice not only within the UK, but internationally.

Responsible Futures was created because, for the last eight years, NUS' surveying of students has consistently shown that c60% of students have either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'Sustainable development is something which I would like to learn more about', and c85% with the statement 'Sustainable development is something which Universities should actively incorporate and promote' (base c15k students)¹.

Responsible Futures was piloted in 2014-15 by 13 institutions, including 5 Further Education institutions and 8 Higher Education across England and Scotland. Following feedback from the pilot cohort, significant developments were made to the programme and it was launched in summer 2015.

To date, over 30 partnerships across the UK have joined Responsible Futures and they collectively, they represent over 500,000 students.

¹ NUS survey results can be found here: [https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/our-](https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/our-research/our-research/skills-and-sustainable-development)

[research/our-research/skills-and-sustainable-development](https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/our-research/our-research/skills-and-sustainable-development)

1.2 Overview of the Audit

As part of the accreditation process, each Partnership undergo a two-day audit. The purpose of the audit is to determine the partnership's score, accreditation level, and conduct in-depth research on the impact of Responsible futures through:

- A documentary review of evidence to verify score,
- Interviews with key individuals,
- And student focus groups.

There are 45 total criteria, of which 10 are mandatory and must be completed to achieve accreditation and 35 are optional. An additional three criteria are self-defined meaning that the Partnership can highlight unique actions they have taken which are not discussed through other criteria.

To achieve the Responsible Futures Accreditation Mark, the Partnership must meet or exceed the score threshold of **200 points**, out of the maximum 300 points, not including the three self-defined criteria (allowing for up to an additional 30 points).

If the partnership does not meet the threshold of 200 points but their score exceeds 100 points, they will be awarded the "Working Towards" Accreditation. Prior to the audit, each Partnership has submitted documentary evidence through the online workbook tool².

1.2.1 Student auditors

An important feature of Responsible Futures audits is their student-led nature. The team of student auditors lead the entire audit: through the documentary evidence review, conducting interviews, and participating in the focus group. Through this experience, they develop a range of valuable skills and attributes whilst deepening their understanding of sustainability. The students are trained and supported by the NUS facilitator.

1.2.2 Documentary Evidence Review

The audit begins with a documentary review of evidence. Through this process, students

determined the score for each criterion and provided feedback.

1.2.2 Interviews

A key component of the audit are the interviews. These informed the audit process as well as providing insights which have contributed to this report and the broader research conducted on the programme.

1.2.3 Focus Groups

The third component of the audit are two student focus groups. The first was the intervention focus group, made up of students who have been actively involved in sustainability and social responsibility within the formal or the informal curriculum (incl. the student auditors). The second was the non-intervention group, made up of students who, to the best of the partnership's knowledge, had not been involved in sustainability or social responsibility initiatives. The student focus groups are used to inform the overarching audit process but will not determine specific scoring.



The 2018 team of CCCU student auditors.

² www.responsiblefutures.org.uk

Results and Feedback

“I think that the Students Union, University and Student Green Office have made incredible progress and are helping to pioneer a project that will in the long run make a huge difference to how the student body view sustainability.”

2019 CCCU Student Auditor

2.0 Your Results

2.1 Your Accreditation

Canterbury Christ Church University and Students' Union have gained the Responsible Futures Accreditation with a score of 232.

2.2 Score Overview

Section	Your Score	Total Possible
Baselines and Benchmarks	22	40
Partnership and Planning	17	20
Leadership and Strategy	39	50
Policy and Commitment	36	45
Interventions	47	50
Impact and Outcomes	33	80
Outreach	14	15
Self-Defined Criteria	24	Up to maximum of 30
Total	232	330*

*Points threshold for accreditation is 200

2.3 Explaining Your Accreditation

As your partnership was awarded the "Responsible Futures Accreditation" you have been awarded the full accreditation. This means that you have exceeded the score threshold of 200 and have demonstrated and evidenced your partnership's commitment and progress for embedding sustainability and social responsibility across the whole institution. This accreditation will be valid for two years, until December 2021, at which time another audit will be required to re-validate your accreditation.

Congratulations to Canterbury Christ Church University and Students' Union on this significant achievement! Thank you for your dedication to creating a learning environment in which students develop the skills, knowledge, and attributes to be agents of change.



Zamzam Ibrahim
National President, NUS

2.4 Key Findings

The auditors reflected on the shared enthusiasm of all staff and students engaged in sustainability at CCCU and the SU. They remarked on the dedication and commitment demonstrated by both the university and the students' union. Here are some of the highlights of the auditors' feedback:

- "The partnership has been an enigmatic and dynamic force that has been determined and driven to achieve their goals." – Student Auditor, 2019
- "I have enjoyed finding out more about what the university does and the impact that it has on sustainability and the wider community outreach and effects." – Student Auditor, 2019
- "I have enjoyed learning about how truly genuine and excited the staff are about suitability, especially Ellie and Peter. The thing I mostly enjoyed about this experience is looking in-depth about everything the partnership has done." – Student Auditor, 2019
- "I would like to personally thank the Partnership on all of their efforts and the fantastic job they are doing on sustainability. I just wish I was more aware of everything that happens here when I started University in order to be more engaged in the events." – Student Auditor, 2019

2.5 Feedback

2.5.1 Baselines and benchmarks (BB01 to BB07)

Criteria Number	Criteria	Estimated Score	Student Auditors' Score
BB001	Within the last three years, the Partnership has completed an institution-wide survey of students on their attitudes towards, and expectations on, social responsibility and sustainability SRS and published the findings.	4	3
BB002	The Partnership has completed a follow-up to the survey conducted in BB001 and published the findings.	3	3
BB003	The Partnership has carried out a thorough baseline curriculum review or audit on SRS and published the findings.	8	8
BB004	The Partnership has completed a follow-up curriculum review or audit on SRS and published the findings.	4	4
BB005	The Partnership routinely asks students about SRS in evaluation surveys.	4	4
BB006	Within the last three years, the Partnership has completed a survey of teaching staff on their understanding of SRS and published the findings.	0	0
BB007	The Partnership has completed a follow-up survey to the survey conducted in BB006 and published the findings.	0	0

2.5.2 Partnership and Plan (PPL001 to PPL003)

Criteria Number	Criteria	Estimated Score	Student Auditors' Score
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PPL001	The Partnership has a working or coordinating group that formally leads on efforts to attain, or retain, Responsible Futures.	3	4
PPL002	The Partnership has an active SMART action plan relating to the issues related to Responsible Futures.	4	4
PPL003	Within the current academic year, the Partnership has proactively engaged key stakeholder groups in the issues related to Responsible Futures.	8	9

2.5.3 Leadership and Strategy (LS001 to LS007)

Criteria Number	Criteria	Estimated Score	Student Auditors' Score
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.	4	5
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.	4	5
LS003	The Partnership has developed a statement on SRS through a consultative process that defines what it means to the institution in relation to its educational purpose and values.	5	5
LS004	The institution's overall strategic plan, and/or the publicly-stated learning, learner or graduate outcomes, skills or attributes, or core learning outcomes include supportive references to the issues related to Responsible Futures.	8	9
LS005	The institution's learning and teaching strategy, academic strategy, or equivalent, includes supportive references to the issues related to Responsible Futures, or it will do after the next review.	8	8
LS006	The Partnership has embedded the issues related to Responsible Futures into the institution's sustainability strategy (or equivalent).	2	2
LS007	SRS is embedded in the internal communication strategies for both the institution and the students' union, and/or the Partnership has successfully reached good numbers of staff and students across the institution with proactive communications relating to the issues related to Responsible Futures.	5	5

2.5.4 Policy and Commitment (POC001 to POC008)

Criteria Number	Criteria	Estimated Score	Student Auditors' Score
POC001	The institution has provided professional development on the issues related to Responsible Futures for relevant personnel.	5	6
POC002	The students' union has formally passed and publicised a policy commitment to embedding SRS in the formal and informal curriculum.	4	5
POC003	One or more named elected student officer has agreed to lead on SRS issues for the students' union this academic year.	3	2
POC004	The Partnership has made sufficient staff or student resource available to substantively progress the issues related to Responsible Futures.	6	9
POC005	The Partnership has made effective use of the relevant quality framework and/or outcome agreements to progress the issues related to Responsible Futures.	4	4
POC006	The Partnership has embedded the issues related to Responsible Futures into their human resource processes.	3	3
POC007	The Partnership has embedded the issues related to Responsible Futures into their induction processes for all types of new starter (students, staff, governors, etc.).	4	5
POC008	The Partnership has worked with the institution's student recruitment and/or widening participation department(s) to incorporate issues relating to SRS into their work.	0	2

2.5.5 Interventions (IN001 to IN009)

Criteria Number	Criteria	Estimated Score	Student Auditors' Score
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.	5	5
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.	3	3
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.	7	7
IN004	During the last 12 months, three or more schools / depts. have done one or more of the following in relation to SRS: discussion-based and participatory learning;	6	7

	problem-based learning; simulation activities; and/or debates on issues related to Responsible Futures.		
IN005	The institution's estates team routinely collaborate with learning and teaching staff to create educational opportunities through their SRS-related work.	4	3
IN006	Within the current academic year, the Partnership has actively made use of student coursework and/or dissertations to support one or more of the other criteria in this workbook or has made firm plans for next academic year.	4	4
IN007	The Partnership actively facilitates structured interdisciplinary experiences, linked to the issues related to Responsible Futures, through the formal curriculum.	6	6
IN008	There are good levels of informal curriculum activity that is supportive of the aims of Responsible Futures.	5	7
IN009	The Partnership has conducted an in-depth analysis of a specific intervention listed above.	5	5

2.5.6 Impact and Outcomes (IO001 to IO004)

Criteria Number	Criteria	Estimated Score	Student Auditors' Score
IO001	The Partnership has reflected on and identified demonstrable positive progress in relation to embedding SRS across the formal curriculum.	0	6
IO002	The Partnership has reflected on and identified demonstrable positive progress in relation to its institution-wide collaborative approach.	0	13
IO003	The Partnership has reflected on and identified their short-term impacts and outcomes in relation to positive outcomes for students.	7	8
IO004	The Partnership has reflected on and identified their long-term impacts and outcomes in relation to positive outcomes for students.	4	6

2.5.7 Outreach (OU001 to OU004)

Criteria Number	Criteria	Estimated Score	Student Auditors' Score
OU001	The Partnership has embedded the issues related to Responsible Futures into their community outreach activities.	4	4
OU002	Within the current academic year, the Partnership has proactively engaged one or more students' union or educational institution on the issues related to Responsible Futures.	2	2
OU003	Within the last three years, the Partnership has presented on their work relating to the Responsible Futures agenda at a sector event.	3	3

OU004	The Partnership has published case studies case studies promoting SRS-related achievements, impacts and outcomes.	5	5
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2.5.8 Self-defined criteria (SD001 to SD003)

Criteria Number	Criteria	Estimated Score	Student Auditors' Score
SD001	Self-defined	8	10
SD002	Self-defined	5	7
SD003	Self-defined	7	7

2.6 Key Recommendations

The auditors' overall recommendations are to:

- Raise further awareness: there is a need for more communication between the university and the students regarding sustainability; there is inconsistent reach of sustainability being embedded in courses (e.g. a geography student may have guest lecturers about sustainability, whilst other disciplines may not); targeting freshers, induction periods, and including sustainability in the student handbook would help.
- More funding: students recognised the importance of dedicated student and staff resource to advance the aims of sustainability at both the university and students' union and would like to see further investment in this space; they want to see the university's budget decisions reflecting the priorities of students. They also recognised that the informal responsibility for ESD taken by many academics relied on their good will, rather than being formally recognised within their role and workload.
- Celebrate the achievements: all auditors said that the efforts of the Green Office, the university, and the SU were inspiring and motivating but that they had not been aware that much of this was going on. Specifically, auditors said: "it's so refreshing to see what people have been doing, what the student body is doing."
- Impact of students: one key reflection that the auditors had was that the impact of students through activities like the Green Office really demonstrated how student-led sustainability at CCCU is. They also recognised how responsive the SU is to feedback and suggestions, citing examples like the exam chill sessions contributing to better social sustainability.

2.7 Student Learning

Four students led the audit process for Responsible Futures, gaining valuable employability and ESD skills as a result. At the close of each day of the audits students participated in reflection activities to track their development over the two days. At the end of the audit, they had the following to say about their personal experience:

- "Surprised me how much I enjoyed [the audit] and how much I learned from it. My skills developed and I believe that these will be transferrable into the professional work place and beyond university life." – Student Auditor, 2019
- "I have been surprised by how my own views of sustainability have changed. I have been pleasantly surprised by how much the university has done to make a positive impact with the Responsible Futures project." – Student Auditor, 2019



The 2018 team of CCCU student auditors.

Further Information

3.0 General Information

3.1 What does my accreditation mean?

The “Responsible Futures Accreditation” means that you have gained the full accreditation by exceeding the score threshold of 200 (out of 300) and have demonstrated and evidenced your partnership’s commitment and progress for embedding sustainability and social responsibility across the whole institution.

The “Responsible Futures – Working Towards Accreditation” recognises your commitment and progress when you have not met the score threshold to be awarded the full accreditation. Through being awarded the “Working Towards Accreditation” your partnership should request a follow-up audit when you feel that you are prepared to go for accreditation. Follow-up audits will be charged the standard audit fee.

3.2 How long will the accreditation last?

Accreditation is valid for two years, so until December 2021 at which time another audit will be required to re-validate your accreditation.

3.3 How do we use the logo?

Each institution will be given the appropriate logo – please use this widely to recognise your accomplishment and your partnership’s commitment to sustainability and social responsibility. If you would like to provide further information about the programme, please [link to www.nus.org.uk/responsiblefutures](http://www.nus.org.uk/responsiblefutures)

3.4 What’s next?

You will be invited to take part in the next Responsible Futures Awards Ceremony. Following the awards ceremony, you will be provided with a photograph of your team receiving your award and the physical certificate. We encourage you to make use of local media outlets to celebrate your achievements.

After achieving accreditation, the annual membership fee will cover all future audits to maintain accreditation as well as ongoing

support. The current fees can be found on the NUS sustainability ratecard, found online.

3.5 How do we keep improving?

We encourage you to use the feedback from this report and through the audit process to inform your work moving forward.

In conducting your next audit, we would hope to see progress against the recommendations outlined in this report.

The Responsible Futures accreditation will push the sector for continuous improvement and we hope you will continue to actively engage with other institutions in the cohort to share learning and good practice.

3.6 How do we compare?

Responsible Futures is not a league table and therefore individual scores will not be published. NUS will not share your scores; however, you are welcome to share them with others if you wish.

Note that 2014/15 pilot year participants worked to a maximum score of 260 points which the accreditation threshold being met at 130 points before the threshold was raised to 200 points out of a maximum 330 in summer 2015.

3.7 I would like to be re-assessed, what can I do?

If you not agree with your score/accreditation and would like to be re-assessed, please contact the Responsible Futures team on responsiblefutures@nus.org.uk. The documentary review can be re-conducted if the partnership feels that the assessment is inaccurate.

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