



EAUC State of the Sector Research 2025

Thank you for taking part in this important survey.

Led by EAUC, in partnership with Students Organising for Sustainability UK (SOS-UK), Association of Colleges (AoC), Education & Training Foundation (ETF), GuildHE, Colleges Scotland and University and College Union (UCU), this research aims to provide **a clear, up-to-date picture of sustainability** across the post-16 education sector in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

We want to understand how sustainability functions operate within institutions, what resources are available, and where the key opportunities and challenges lie. Your insights will shape national-level advocacy, strategic guidance, and future sector support.

By completing this survey, you will:

- Contribute to a **national evidence base** that strengthens sector influence
- Help **shape targeted funding, guidance and support**
- Ensure **sustainability voices are heard** in key policy spaces
- Strengthen the internal **business case for sustainability** at your institution

The survey includes questions on:

- **Your institution and sustainability function**
- **Resourcing and institutional approach**
- **Barriers and opportunities**
- **Demographics**

The survey will take approximately **25 minutes** to complete. You can preview the questions in PDF format.

This survey is for any individual with a **formal remit for sustainability** - anyone who leads, oversees, or supports your institution's sustainability work as part of their job description (i.e. whatever formal arrangement is in place at your institution to progress sustainability). We recognise that this responsibility may rest with a single individual or be shared across a team, depending on the institution.

Please note that the survey will be completely **anonymous**. Any personal or identifying information about individuals or your institution will only be viewed by members of

the EAUC team and will not be linked to overall institution responses. Data collected through this form is stored and used in accordance with [EAUC's privacy policy](#). You will not be personally identified.

On completing the survey, you will be entered into a prize draw to win a free ticket to either the **2025 UK and Ireland Green Gown Awards Ceremony** or the **EAUC Annual Conference 2026**.

Your input is invaluable in driving positive change and strengthening our shared commitment to sustainability. Thank you for your time and insights.

In partnership with:



**Students Organising
for Sustainability
United Kingdom**



1. Do you have a formal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility within your institution?
 - a. No – neither of these
 - b. Yes - formal remit or responsibility (e.g. included within job description)**
 - c. No - informal remit or responsibility

Institution information

This section helps us understand the institutions within the post-16 education sector. By gathering information, we can better tailor our support and create meaningful insights for the sector.

2. Which of the following types of institution do you currently work at?
 - a. Higher education
 - b. Further education**
 - c. Further higher education
3. Which type of further education institution do you currently work at?
 - a. General FE College**
 - b. Sixth Form College
 - c. Adult and Community Learning Provider
 - d. Specialist College (e.g., land-based or arts-focused)
 - e. Independent Training Provider (ITPs)
 - f. Other (please specify)
4. Approximately how many full-time equivalent (FTE) staff does your institution have?
 - a. 100-1000**
 - b. 1001-2500
 - c. 2501-5000
 - d. 5000+
5. Approximately how many full-time equivalent students are enrolled at your institution?
 - a. Fewer than 500
 - b. 500–1,999
 - c. 2,000–4,999
 - d. 5,000–9,999
 - e. 10,000–19,999**

- f. 20,000-29,999
 - g. 30,000-39,999
 - h. Over 40,000
6. Where is your institution's primary location?
- a. England
 - b. Wales
 - c. Scotland
 - d. Ireland
 - e. Northern Ireland
 - f. Other (please specify)
7. Which of these options best describes your role in relation to delivering on environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility?
- a. I am a member of a team of staff delivering on environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility in my institution
 - b. I am a lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility in my institution
 - c. I am the sole member of staff delivering on environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility in my institution
 - d. None of those
 - e. Other (please specify)
8. Which of the following job types most closely matches your current role?
- a. Sustainability professional
 - b. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
 - c. Finance and procurement
 - d. Research
 - e. Student / student officer
 - f. Support staff
 - g. Senior management / executive
 - h. Student support
 - i. Estates
 - j. Manager of department
 - k. Teaching
 - l. Other (please specify)
9. Within your institution, how long have you worked in a role directly involved in delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility?
- a. Less than 6 months
 - b. 6 months to less than 1 year
 - c. 1 to less than 3 years

- d. 3 to less than 5 years
- e. 5 years or more
- f. Not applicable – I don't deliver on sustainability and social responsibility

10. In your opinion, what has changed the most in the last 10 years in terms of sustainability within the post-16 education sector?

a. Open answer

As I have only been in the sector in the UK for 3 years, I have not noticed significant changes. However, there does seem to be more emphasis on adaptation and biodiversity in recent years.

11. We would like to gain a picture of the current pay for the sustainability profession in education. Please indicate your current salary range, per annum.

- a. Prefer not to say
- b. Not applicable
- c. Under £18,000
- d. £18,000 - £22,000
- e. £22,001 - £30,000
- f. £30,001 - £40,000
- g. £40,001 - £50,000
- h. £50,001 - £60,000
- i. £60,001 - £80,000
- j. Above £80,000

12. How is your role currently funded? Please select the most appropriate answer.

- a. Core funds
- b. Funded project
- c. 16-18 funded route
- d. Apprenticeships funded route
- e. Adult education funded route
- f. Research funded route
- g. Carbon reduction funded route
- h. Don't know
- i. Other (please specify)

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I am satisfied with my overall job security.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

- f. Don't know
- g. Prefer not to say

Resources for sustainability

This section explores the staff, budget, and structural support available for sustainability within your institution. Understanding these resources helps identify gaps, opportunities, and areas for future investment across the sector.

1. Approximately what proportion of your time is spent working on sustainability?
 - a) 0%
 - b) 10%
 - c) 20%
 - d) 30%
 - e) 40%
 - f) 50%
 - g) 60%
 - h) 70%
 - i) 80%
 - j) 90%
 - k) 100%

2. Which areas of the institution are included within your environmental sustainability and social responsibility strategy or policy? Please select all that apply.
 - a) Estate/facilities
 - b) Information services
 - c) Commercial services
 - d) Finance
 - e) Communications and marketing
 - f) Students' union
 - g) Senior leadership
 - h) Curriculum/Teaching and Learning
 - i) Research
 - j) Human resources
 - k) Procurement
 - l) Governing body

- m) All areas
- n) Other (please specify)

3. How many members of staff within your institution have a formal remit to deliver on environmental sustainability and social responsibility (FTE)?
- a) 0
 - b) 1-2
 - c) 3-5
 - d) 6-10
 - e) More than 10
4. Thinking about the last 5 years, how has the overall number of people with a formal remit for environmental sustainability and social responsibility changed at your institution? Please indicate in which time period each of the following changes occurred in.
- a) It has generally increased
 - b) It has remained about the same
 - c) It has generally decreased
 - d) Don't know

Scale: 0-1 years ago; 1-2 years ago; 3-5 years ago

3. Do you expect the staff resource with a formal remit to deliver on environmental sustainability and social responsibility to change for the 2025-2026 academic year?
- a) We expect the staff resource to increase
 - b) We expect the staff resource to stay the same
 - c) We expect the staff resource to decrease
 - d) Don't know
4. You indicated that you expect the staff resource with a formal remit to deliver on sustainability to change in 2025-26 compared to 2024-25. Please indicate the expected change in the number of staff (FTE) with a formal sustainability remit. NA
- a) Increase of more than 5 staff
 - b) Increase of 3-5 staff
 - c) Increase of 1-2 staff

- d) Decrease of 1-2 staff
 - e) Decrease of 3-5 staff
 - f) Decrease of more than 5 staff
7. What level is the most senior member of staff with a formal remit to deliver on environmental sustainability and social responsibility?
- a) Junior management
 - b) Student Vice president / elected student officer
 - c) Middle management
 - d) Registrar / Chief Operating Officer
 - e) Senior management
 - f) Vice chancellor / President / Chief Executive / Principal
 - g) Director/Head of Department
 - h) Governer
 - i) Not applicable
 - j) Other (please specify)
8. Does your institution use any of the following for extra sustainability staffing resourcing? Please tick all that apply.
- a) Interns / placements
 - b) Apprentices
 - c) Student ambassadors
 - d) Consultants (e.g. EAUC/SUMS Consultancy)
 - e) Volunteers
 - f) Secondments
 - g) Participation in external programmes (e.g. SOS-UK)
9. How do you expect your institution's use of these sustainability resourcing types to change over the next 12 months?
- a) Interns / placements
 - b) Apprentices
 - c) Student ambassadors
 - d) Consultants (e.g. EAUC/SUMS Consultancy)
 - e) Volunteers
 - f) Secondments
 - g) Participation in external programmes (e.g. SOS-UK)

Scale: Increase; Stay the Same; Decrease; Don't Know; Not applicable

10. Do you have a dedicated budget for sustainability work?
- a) Yes
 - b) Yes, within another department's budget (e.g., estates/teaching)
 - c) No
11. What was the approximate total budget available for delivering on sustainability within your institution for the 2024-2025 academic year (excluding the payment of utility bills)?
- a) Scale up to 500m
 - b) Don't know
 - c) Prefer not to say
12. What are your expectations for the budget available for sustainability for the 2025-26 academic year compared to the 2024-25 academic year?
- a) We expect the budget to increase in real terms
 - b) We expect the budget to stay the same in real terms
 - c) We expect the budget to decrease in real terms
 - d) Don't know
 - e) Prefer not to say
13. You indicated that you expect the budget available to deliver on sustainability to change in 2025-26 compared to 2024-25. Please let us know what percentage increase or decrease you expect to see. NA
- a) -100 – 100%
14. Have you received any external funding to resource your sustainability work in 2024-25?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Don't know

15. If yes, please specify the source(s) of the funding and estimate what proportion of your total sustainability budget it represents.

- a) **Open answer** In 2024/25, we have received external funding from Cycling Scotland, Cycling UK, Glasgow City Council (LEZ Community Support Fund), and The Tree Council. As we do not have a designated sustainability budget, the proportion of total budget cannot be calculated.

Institutional approach to sustainability

This section looks at how sustainability is prioritised and embedded within your institution. It explores strategic commitment, leadership, and how sustainability is viewed and integrated across different functions.

1. Do you have a net zero target that has been signed off by senior leadership?

Note: Race to Zero for Universities and Colleges is a UN-backed global collective of post-16 educations committed to achieving net zero.

Signatories are required to ensure that their net zero action plan is published on their organisation's website and linked via the current signatories page. Please contact info@eauc.org.uk if you wish to update your signatory records.

- a. Yes and it is listed on the [Race to Zero website](#)
- b. Yes and it is not listed on the [Race to Zero website](#)
- c. No
- d. Don't know

2. Do you think this target will change in the next 5 years?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

3. If yes, why and in what way?

- a. The target will be updated due to changing national/international policy
- b. The institution is not on track to meet the current target
- c. The target will be made more ambitious
- d. The target will be made less ambitious
- e. Other (please specify)

4. How does your institution view sustainability?

- a. As an environmental issue
- b. As a social justice issue
- c. Both of these
- d. Don't know
- e. Other (please specify)

5. Has your institution aligned its strategy with national or regional sustainability targets (e.g. [Race to Zero](#), [UK's 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy](#))?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

6. If yes, which targets has your institution aligned with, and in what ways is this reflected in your strategic planning?
 - a. **Open answer**
[Race to Zero & Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#); which is considered in [College Risk Register](#), the [Estates and Sustainability Strategy](#), the [Climate Change Action Plan](#), and the [College's Race to Zero Action Plan](#).

7. In your opinion, which of the following options best describes your institution's overall outlook on environmental sustainability and social responsibility? Please select your top 3 choices.
 - a. A way to enhance teaching and learning
 - b. A way to save money
 - c. A core part of institutional purpose
 - d. A way to improve institutional reputation
 - e. A requirement to comply with legislation or regulation
 - f. An estates / facilities issue
 - g. A responsibility shared across the whole institution
 - h. A strategic priority for the institution
 - i. Don't know
 - j. Other (please specify)

8. How would you rate your institution's commitment to addressing each of the following issues?
 - a. Leadership and governance [Achieving Goals](#)
 - b. Education for sustainable development [Strategy & goals](#)
 - c. Empowering students on sustainability [Achieving Goals](#)
 - d. Conducting research into sustainability issues [NA](#)
 - e. Sustainable research practices [NA](#)
 - f. Carbon reduction [Strategy & goals](#)
 - g. Ethical investments / unethical divestment [NA](#)
 - h. Sustainable procurement [Strategy & goals](#)
 - i. Sustainable travel [Strategy & goals](#)
 - j. Resource efficiency [Strategy & goals](#)

- k. Local, sustainable food and drink [Strategy & Goals](#)
- l. Community engagement and partnerships [Achieving Goals](#)
- m. Place making (the collaborative process we use to shape our public spaces and buildings) [Beginning](#)
- n. Encouraging wildlife / biodiversity [Beginning](#)
- o. Recycling and waste [Strategy](#)

Scale: We're achieving our goals; We have a strategy, goals and a resourced action plan; We have a strategy and goals; We have a strategy; We're beginning to think about this; We don't think about or prioritise this

9. In your opinion, how important is addressing environmental sustainability and social responsibility to the following groups within your institution?
- a. Trade union representatives [Important](#)
 - b. Trustees/governors [Important](#)
 - c. Senior managers (academic/teaching staff) [Important](#)
 - d. Senior managers (non-academic) [Very important](#)
 - e. Vice chancellor/Chief Executive/Principal [Very important](#)
 - f. Students [Important](#)
 - g. Students' union/association officer [Very important](#)

Scale: Very important; Important; Neutral; Unimportant; Not important at all; Don't know

10. In your view, how important is support from each of the following groups in progressing environmental sustainability and social responsibility within your institution? Please rate the potential value of support from each group, regardless of whether they are currently involved.
- a. Students [Very important](#)
 - b. Trustees/governors [Important](#)
 - c. Students' union/association officers [Important](#)
 - d. Senior managers (academic/teaching staff) [Very Important](#)
 - e. Senior managers (non-academic) [Very Important](#)
 - f. Vice chancellor/Chief Executive/Principal [Very Important](#)

Scale: Very important; Important; Neutral; Unimportant; Not important at all; Not applicable

11. How influential are the following institutions and groups on the importance placed on addressing environmental sustainability and social responsibility within your institution?

- a. Trade unions Slightly
- b. Government policy Very
- c. Funding councils Very
- d. Higher Education sector bodies NA
- e. Students Very
- f. Student institutions such as unions, associations or networks Moderately
- g. Further Education sector bodies Moderately
- h. Sector sustainability associations Moderately
- i. Local community Slightly
- j. Senior leadership within the institution Very
- k. Businesses and employers Very

Scale: Extremely influential; Very influential; Moderately influential; Slightly influential; Not influential; Not influential at all; Not applicable

12. To what extent is your institution currently engaging with emerging technologies (e.g. AI, cloud-based systems) in support of sustainability goals (e.g. net zero, data use, operational efficiency)? Please select the most accurate statement.

- a. We are actively using or exploring these technologies in our sustainability work
- b. We have started internal conversations but not yet taken action
- c. These technologies are not currently being considered as part of our sustainability approach
- d. I'm unsure of our institution's engagement with these technologies
- e. Other (please specify)

13. To what extent is there inter-departmental collaboration on sustainability within your institution? (e.g., between teaching, curriculum, finance, research, procurement, estates departments).

- a. Extensive collaboration across multiple departments
- b. Some collaboration between a few departments
- c. Limited collaboration with isolated examples
- d. No collaboration currently
- e. Don't know

14. If applicable, which departments do you collaborate with most on sustainability? Please select all that apply.
- a. Estate/facilities
 - b. Information technology/digital
 - c. Commercial services (e.g. catering, conferencing, retail)
 - d. Finance
 - e. Communications and marketing
 - f. Students' union/association
 - g. Senior leadership
 - h. Curriculum / Teaching and Learning
 - i. Research and innovation
 - j. Human resources
 - k. Procurement
 - l. Governance
 - m. Student services/learner support
 - n. Careers
 - o. Quality and compliance
 - p. Equality, diversity and inclusion
 - q. International
 - r. Other (please specify)
15. What are the top 3 barriers to effective cross-departmental collaboration on sustainability at your institution?
- a. Lack of shared goals
 - b. Communication gaps
 - c. Departmental silos
 - d. Lack of time or resource
 - e. Lack of leadership prioritisation
 - f. Differing priorities between academic and professional services
 - g. Other (please specify)
16. How do your learners and students inform your institutions' sustainability work? Please select all that apply.
- a. There is an informal green group
 - b. Through student representation on institutional sustainability committee(s)

- c. Through dedicated student sustainability committees, groups or societies
- d. Through our institutional course rep/learner voice processes
- e. Through formal consultation (e.g. surveys, focus groups)
- f. Through the students' union/association
- g. Informally, through staff-student dialogue or ad hoc feedback
- h. Learners/students are not currently involved in shaping our sustainability work
- i. Don't know
- j. Other (please specify)

17. In what ways is sustainability currently integrated into staff training at your institution? Please select all that apply.

- a. Included in all staff inductions
- b. Available as optional CPD or training sessions
- c. Embedded within mandatory training (e.g. EDI, health & safety, compliance)
- d. Targeted at specific staff roles or teams (e.g. estates, curriculum leads)
- e. Integrated into academic CPD (e.g. pedagogy, curriculum design training, fellowship programmes)
- f. Promoted through informal learning opportunities (e.g. lunch & learns, internal comms)
- g. Included as a standard feature in personal development plans (PDPs) or annual review templates
- h. No current sustainability training is offered
- i. Don't know
- j. Other (please specify)

Barriers and opportunities in the sector

This section explores the key factors that are helping or hindering progress on sustainability across the sector. It aims to identify common challenges and where support or change is most needed.

1. What barriers prevents your institution from doing more on environmental sustainability and social responsibility? Please select the top 3 options.
 - a. Lack of opportunities for student involvement

- b. There is limited sector-level support for advancing sustainability initiatives
 - c. Lack of staff interest in the issues
 - d. Lack of student interest in the issues
 - e. Lack of support from senior leadership
 - f. Lack of culture for sustainability on campus
 - g. Financial security (e.g. budget cuts)
 - h. Lack of organisational infrastructure (e.g. siloed working, policies, departments with conflicting priorities)
 - i. Lack of financial resources
 - j. Institution prioritising other issues
 - k. Lack of staff resources/capacity
 - l. Don't know
 - m. Other (please specify)
2. If you'd like to add any further detail about the barriers faced by institutions in doing more on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, please let us know in the box below.
- a. **Open answer**
3. Which two of the following would help your institution the most to address environmental sustainability and social responsibility? Please select the most appropriate answer.
- a. Innovative ways to increase staff capacity
 - b. More opportunities for student involvement
 - c. Increase collaboration between institutions (e.g. sharing good practice)
 - d. Ring fenced sustainability budgets
 - e. Remove organisational barriers (e.g. siloed working, policies, departments with conflicting priorities)
 - f. Development and training opportunities for staff
 - g. Strengthen support from senior leadership
 - h. Increase dedicated financial resources
 - i. Make a strategic priority
 - j. Encourage behavioural change for sustainability on campus
 - k. Other (please specify)
 - l. Don't know

4. What are the top three sector-wide changes that would most improve the implementation of sustainability within institutions?
 - a. Increased funding specifically for sustainability initiatives
 - b. Clearer national/regional sustainability policies or targets
 - c. Stronger leadership accountability and governance frameworks
 - d. More collaboration and knowledge sharing between institutions
 - e. Integration of sustainability into regulatory and quality assurance frameworks
 - f. Expanded staff training and professional development opportunities
 - g. Improved access to data, metrics and monitoring tools
 - h. Greater opportunities for student engagement and participation
 - i. Sector-wide sustainability standards or accreditation frameworks
 - j. Stronger alignment with national sustainability and social justice goals
 - k. More support for embedding sustainability in curriculum and research
 - l. Better infrastructure and operational support for sustainability delivery
 - m. Other (please specify)
 - n. Don't know

5. If you would like to make any further comments about the issues covered in this survey, please use the box below.
 - a. **Open answer**

Demographics

This section helps us understand the diversity of those working in sustainability roles across the sector. The information will support efforts to improve equity, representation, and inclusion.

1. To the best of your knowledge, how well represented are individuals with the following protected characteristics within your institution's sustainability function? [All - proportionately represented](#)
 - a. Age
 - b. Disability
 - c. Gender
 - d. Marriage and civil partnership
 - e. Pregnancy and maternity
 - f. Race
 - g. Religion or belief

- h. Sex
- i. Sexual orientation
- j. Socio-economic class

Scale: Very under-represented; Somewhat under-represented; About proportionately represented; Over-represented; Don't know

2. To the best of your knowledge, how well represented are individuals with the following protected characteristics within the leadership of your institution's sustainability function? [All - proportionately represented](#)

- a. Age
- b. Disability
- c. Gender reassignment
- d. Marriage and civil partnership
- e. Pregnancy and maternity
- f. Race
- g. Religion or belief
- h. Sex
- i. Sexual orientation
- j. Socio-economic class

Scale: Very under-represented; Somewhat under-represented; About proportionately represented; Over-represented; Don't know

3. What is your age?

- a. Under 18
- b. 18-24
- c. 25-34
- d. 35-44
- e. 45-54
- f. 55-64
- g. 65+
- h. Prefer not to say

4. What gender do you identify as?

- a. Female
- b. Male

- c. Non-binary
- d. Other
- e. Prefer not to say

5. What is your ethnicity?

- a. White (including Irish, British, and other White backgrounds)
- b. Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
- c. Asian or Asian British (e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese)
- d. Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
- e. Prefer not to say
- f. Other (please specify)

Please provide your contact details below. This information will be used solely to keep track of responses and to enter you into the prize draw. Your details will be kept confidential and will not be shared beyond this purpose.

- 1. Your name
 - a. **Open answer**
- 2. Your email
 - a. **Open answer**
- 3. Name of your institution
 - a. **Open answer**