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# CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE: EDUCATING FOR A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD

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**SUBTHEME:** Modes of Learning

## PROBLEM

At Deakin University, sustainability curriculum is predominantly concentrated in courses that specifically address environmental and sustainability topics. Consequently, a substantial portion of students enrolled in our programs are not acquiring skills and knowledge related to sustainable practices within their specific disciplines. This educational gap means that many students are graduating without the critical learning outcomes required to effectively navigate and contribute to the workforce and community, amidst the world's worsening justice and climate problems.

## PLAN

To address this gap in our STEM faculty, sustainability curriculum will be integrated across the full range of our educational programs, ensuring connection to the University's sustainability strategy, and the faculty's structures and research activities. Through the application of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) (United Nations, 2015), students will develop their abilities to consider a wide range of global challenges related to their discipline, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, and justice. By the end of their course, all students will be able to demonstrate sustainability knowledge, skills and behaviors through tackling authentic real-world problem scenarios related to their discipline.

## ACTION

Earlier this year a scoping exercise targeting Course Directors was undertaken and confirmed united interest to integrate sustainability curriculum across all disciplines within the faculty. As a result, a mapping exercise was undertaken to establish where sustainability curriculum was currently being taught and to identify the gaps and opportunities. Six student representatives from a final year undergraduate cohort were also engaged, providing feedback on their experience of the UN SDGs both before and during their course. They also advised on the effectiveness of viewing real-world, discipline specific problems through the lens of the UN SDGs. A collaborative project involving teaching teams, curriculum experts, students and internal and external stakeholders is underway. A trial to integrate sustainability curriculum and assessments into first and final year science units has begun.

## REFLECTION

Based on student feedback, trial units were designed to highlight where the curriculum aligns with the UN SDGs, by using icons, brief alignment statements and topic boxes. Teaching teams modelling how to interpret the UN SDGs was considered vital in preparing students to apply them to their own team-based projects addressing real-world problems. The trial's success will be analysed through feedback collected from both teaching teams and students at the end of trimester. This information will be used to inform the next iteration of the project.

## REFERENCES

United Nations. (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.  
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