

RESPONSIBLE FUTURES HOST PARTNERSHIPS

Overview

Responsible Futures launched in 2014 with a pilot cohort of 13 partnerships and has now grown to over 48 partnerships who have engaged in the programme, globally. The programme is designed to support institutions to work in equal and active partnership with their students' to embed sustainability and social responsibility through all parts of the student learning experience (formal, informal, and subliminal curriculum).

Host Partnerships over the years

Since 2019, Responsible have worked with host partnerships to play a leadership role in the Responsible Futures cohort. These partnerships work with SOS-UK throughout the year to co-develop meaningful and impactful support offering for the national and international Responsible Futures network. Through their roles as hosts, these partnerships:

- Hosted relevant webinars:
 - Capturing positive ESD outcomes for students through relationship building (UCEM)
 - Curriculum mapping – from development, to implementation (Strathclyde)
 - Nature connectedness and student learning (Derby)
 - Decolonising DMU (DMU)
 - Decolonising the Curriculum (MMU)
 - Student Symposium (UWE)
 - ESD Hackathon (OU)
- Contribute to RF support afternoons
- Mentor other Responsible Futures partnerships
- Represent the programme and wider ESD work at sector events

The feedback from previous host partnerships has been overwhelmingly positive. Their feedback included: how great it was to work with other host partnerships; the value of bringing people together and 'hosting' conversations and creating space to collaborate; the pride in being selected as a host; the additional recognition it gave Responsible Futures within their institution/Students' Union; the positive recognition granted by

becoming a host; the quality of support from SOS-UK in being a 'host'; and, most importantly, their shared ambition to create a space for learning where it is safe to exchange ideas and be honest about challenges.

This final point picks up on the overwhelming piece of feedback from host partnerships and others alike about the host partnership scheme: the role of the host partnerships has helped in creating virtual and physical spaces within the Responsible Futures programme completely unlike other spaces in the sector. For example, one host partnership remarked that at a big conference there can be pressure to talk about all the things that are going well, but within Responsible Futures there is space to talk about what is not working and how we can learn from that in a safe space with other like-minded colleagues.

Concept

The concept of a 'Host Partnership' initially emerged from talking about 'Champion Partnership' and then 'Beacon Partnership' status. The consensus across both Support Days was that Responsible Futures participants did not want something that introduced competition into the cohort nor something that highlights one partnership as the 'best'. Instead, in line with the spirit of Responsible Futures, **the 'Host Partnership' status seeks to recognise a partnership that is willing to play a leadership role within the programme, share their practice (the good, the bad, and the ugly!), and support the learning of others.**

Like the host of the Olympics, **the Host Partnership does not need to consider themselves the 'best', nor does their Responsible Futures audit score need to be as high as possible, instead they are seeking to share their approaches to sustainability education in an effort to advance the good practice of the sector and create spaces for learning and collaborating.** The Host Partnership status is a recognition of that partnership's willingness to host a learning space, not about being the top of a league table.

What does the Host Partnership status entail?

- Partnerships put themselves forward for this status through a self-nomination proposal;
- The label is used as an opportunity to collaborate, share, and showcase your work;
- The framing is supportive and focused on learning, not based on score or ranking, not competitive,
- And partnerships that nominate themselves must be willing to share their success as well as their challenges and failures.

What would Host Partnerships receive/give to the cohort/sector?

SOS-UK recognises Host Partnerships through:

- Additional information on the Responsible Futures webpage,
- An updated Responsible Futures logo (highlighting they are a Host Partnership),
- A news piece/case study published featuring their work,
- Covering travel/conference fees if the Partnership presents on Responsible Futures at a sector event, where budget allows
- Support for promoting events, publications, news pieces through SOS-UK channels,
- And automatic full marks on several related criteria for their next RF audit submission.

Host Partnerships could contribute to the cohort through:

- Hosting an in-person support Days/afternoons (incl. design of the agenda in collaboration with SOS-UK, if in-person - provision of room and catering, and a bit of 'show and tell'),
- The other contributions of the Host Partnership are not prescribed, but instead proposed by the Partnership in their proposal to become a host. This could include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Presenting a webinar,
 - Mentoring/coaching another partnership in the cohort (note: in the past this was very often a one-off phone call, rather than a long term major mentorship relationship),
 - Offering peer-to-peer support (telephone, Skype, or hosting one-on-one visits from colleagues across the cohort),
 - Presenting at sector events on Responsible Futures (e.g. running a session at EAUC conference),
 - Master classes on a particular topic,
 - Tagging this onto another event, e.g. an EAUC Regional Meeting,
 - Publishing a paper on their experiences of Responsible Futures,
 - Hosting experiential learning spaces, multi-day events, conferences (this might be activity the partnership already was planning to do, but can then gain additional recognition and support with promotion through their host status).

Logistical considerations

- Partnerships hold the status for one academic year;
- The number of Host Partnerships could vary year on year but there would ideally be at least two in the UK (one north, one south) and one internationally;
- The Host Partnership should consider their own capacity in applying for this status and because of this, some partnerships will not want to ever become Hosts and that is ok!

Criteria for selection of Host Partnerships

Partnerships are only eligible for Host Partnership status *after* successfully gaining RF Accreditation. If they wish, partnerships being audited in the spring can still apply for Host status in anticipation of a successful audit.

Partnerships should develop a one-page proposal outlining what they would do as a Host Partnership, this should cover the following questions and recognise how both the institution and students' union would seek to contribute:

- What parts of your approach to Education for Sustainable Development do you feel others could benefit from learning? Are there specific aspects you would seek to share as a Host Partnership?
- What would you envision hosting? The only requirement is to host a Support Day but some Hosts may wish to engage with other partnerships and/or the wider sector in various other ways. Please describe these here.
- What would you like from SOS-UK to celebrate and support your Host Partnership status, if you were selected?
- And, finally, a declaration that the partnership has the resource to commit to being a Host Partnership.

Nest steps

Interested partnerships should submit [complete the application form](#) by **15th September, 2025**.