Engaging with the Responsible Futures framework guidance

The following resource can help you better understand the Responsible Futures framework and how it can support you to meaningfully embed sustainability in student learning through a whole-institution approach.

Terminology

The terminology used in the criteria is often broad, in order for your partnership to adapt it in a way that suits your unique way of working.

An example of this can be seen within the Partnership and Planning theme:

> PPL003 - Within the current academic year, the Partnership has proactively and meaningfully engaged key stakeholder groups in the issues related to Responsible Futures. These key stakeholder groups should be within the institution, but also externally in the local community or more widely at the regional or national level.

The terminology is not prescriptive, allowing your partnership to engage with the criteria in a way that suits and is relevant to your context whilst challenging you to progress embedding sustainability into all student learning.

Through auditor training, we ensure student auditors and moderators are fully aware of the context of the partnership they are auditing, which helps them to understand the approach taken by the partnership.

The 'How you will be audited' section is the best place to identify whether you have met the criteria or not. There are usually examples of what can be accepted as evidence, and information on how you can achieve a higher score.

Let's use PPL003's 'How you will be audited' section as an example for this:

> Auditors will look for evidence that the Partnership has proactively and successfully engaged key stakeholder groups: student programme representatives (or equivalent); careers and employability leads; institutional and student leadership team; professional service staff; teaching staff; sector bodies; trade union representatives; local community groups; local employers; local authority groups, etc. Distance learning providers are encouraged to identify other stakeholder groups within their spheres of influence.

SOS!UK **Students Organising for Sustainability United Kingdom**

Partnerships can add additional stakeholder groups to the list, so long as they can justify why they are a key group at the audit stage.

To achieve the top score, the Partnership will need to have engaged five or more of these groups, and should have done so through formal committee structures where applicable. There must be evidence that this has supported a joined-up approach to work on issues related to Responsible Futures.

Understanding the criteria

Approaching each criterion with these questions in mind can help to guide your understanding:

1. What is the main purpose of the criterion? Why does the criterion exist to help embed issues relating to Responsible Futures across your partnership?

2. Why is the criterion categorised within this particular theme? (e.g. Policy and Commitment)

3. What are the desired outcomes? What would this look like within your partnership?

4. How may the criterion contribute to institutional change? How can that be done within and across your partnership?

Themes

The themes can help you to understand the purpose of specific criterion and what it's asking of your partnership. Consider how the themes inform one another and contribute to a holistic, whole-institution approach to embedding sustainability in student learning. Please note – the letters in brackets next to the theme is the abbreviation used for each criterion.

Baselines and Benchmarks (BB)

Criteria in this theme support your partnership to gain an in-depth understanding, knowledge, and familiarity with ESD across your partnership, particularly amongst students and staff, and to monitor progress.

BB001 - Within the last two years, the partnership has completed an institution-wide survey of students on their attitudes towards and expectations on sustainability and published the findings.

Partnership and Planning (PPL)

These criteria look at how you work across the partnership and the connection between the institution and student leadership, to support a whole-institution approach to embedding sustainability in student learning.

PPL001 - The Partnership has a working or coordinating group that leads on sustainability, in particular efforts around Responsible Futures.

SOS!UK **Students Organising for Sustainability United Kingdom**

Leadership and Strategy (LS)

Criteria in this theme support partnerships to work with institutional leadership and gain buy-in through statements of support and strategy to ensure meaningful change occurs at all levels, including top-down.

> LS002 - The institution's learning and teaching strategy, academic strategy, or equivalent, includes supportive references to issues related to Responsible Futures, or it will after the next review.

Policy and Commitment (POC)

Criteria within this theme support your partnership to commit appropriate resources to embedding sustainability in student learning and to align this work with existing processes, to ensure there is capacity to deliver this work long-term.

> POC001 - The institution has provided professional development and dedicated support for relevant personnel on the issues related to Responsible Futures.

Interventions (IN)

These criteria support a range of interventions that can take place across the institution and student leadership to engage students and staff in a whole-institution approach to embedding sustainability in learning.

> IN001 - Within the current academic year, the Partnership has run one or more internal event bringing together staff, students, and the wider institutional community on sustainability.

Impacts and Outcomes (IO)

Criteria in this theme support your partnership to reflect on both the long term and short term impact of the criterion across the different spheres of your partnership.

> IO001 - The partnership has reflected on and identified demonstrable positive progress in embedding sustainability across the formal curriculum.

Outreach (OU)

These criteria support your partnership to share your progress and work with other institutions and more widely, and to seek opportunities to learn from others.

> OU002 - Within the last two years, the Partnership has proactively engaged one or more student leadership group or educational institution on the issues related to Responsible Futures.

Self-defined Criteria (SD)

These criteria ask partnerships to highlight and outline their unique good practice.

SOS!UK   **Students Organising
for Sustainability
United Kingdom**

SD001 - To highlight the innovative, creative, and unique practices of each partnership, Responsible Futures encourages the submission of up to three self-defined criteria.

Key words

You may notice the use of key words in each criterion, such as 'proactively', 'meaningfully', 'fully engaged with' and 'effective use'. Focusing on these key words when engaging with a specific criterion will help you to progress meaningful work and support your auditors to see this during the audit.

Examples include:

PPL003 - Within the current academic year, the partnership has **proactively and meaningfully** engaged key stakeholder groups in the issues related to Responsible Futures.

OU002 - Within the last two years, the partnership has **proactively engaged** one or more student leadership group or educational institution on the issues related to Responsible Futures.

POC005 - The partnership has **made effective use** of the relevant quality framework and/or outcome agreements to progress the issues related to Responsible Futures.

Up-to-date information

A lot of the criteria are timebound, as Responsible Futures emphasises continual progress. This means that in order to meet the criterion, evidence you upload must be aligned with the expectations set.

See the example below from Baselines and Benchmarks (BB001):

Within the last two years, the partnership has completed an institution-wide survey of students on their attitudes towards and expectations on sustainability and published the findings.

Further resources

Further information is available on the toolkit system if there are words or terms used that you are unfamiliar with.

Please reach out to your Project Manager if you have any questions.

SOS!UK **Students Organising
for Sustainability
United Kingdom**