

Green Skills and Green Careers

Student Sustainability Symposium

10 April 2025



STUDENTS
ORGANISING FOR
SUSTAINABILITY
UNITED KINGDOM



Your facilitators



CJ Watson
Responsible
Futures
Programme
Coordinator
SOS - UK



**Oliver Yu
Hurst**
Project
Manager -
Education
SOS - UK

Aims and objectives

Our aim for this session:

- Explore how everyone can get involved with green careers and skills.

Objectives:

1. Feel confident in communicating sustainability values
2. Understand different sustainability skills and how they can apply to any occupation or discipline
3. Tangible ways and opportunities to develop and apply green skills in the future

1) Growth



1) Development



Understanding your growth: How you can contribute to sustainability through your current, or future career?



2: Seeds Planted - At the start of your journey

4: Tree - Fully fledged understanding



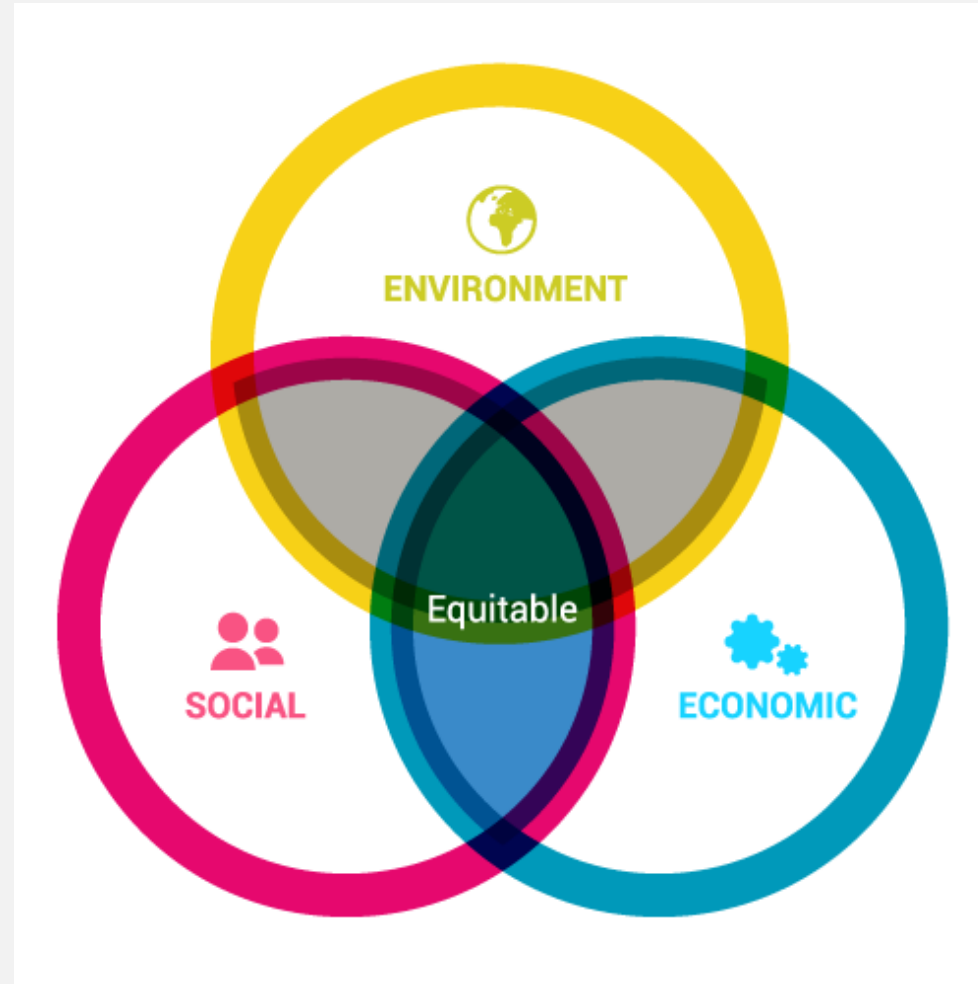
1: Sowing the seeds - New to this idea



3: Sapling - Solid grasp

Holistic sustainability

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Global student demand for sustainability

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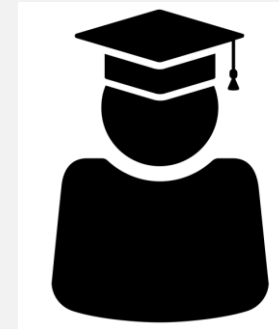
We know from research that the majority of students want more sustainability education. In 2020, SOS International surveyed 7000 students from over 100 Higher Education institutions around the world about their experience of sustainability in education:



92% agree that sustainable development is something which all universities and colleges should actively incorporate and promote



73% agreed that sustainable development should be actively incorporated into and promoted by all courses

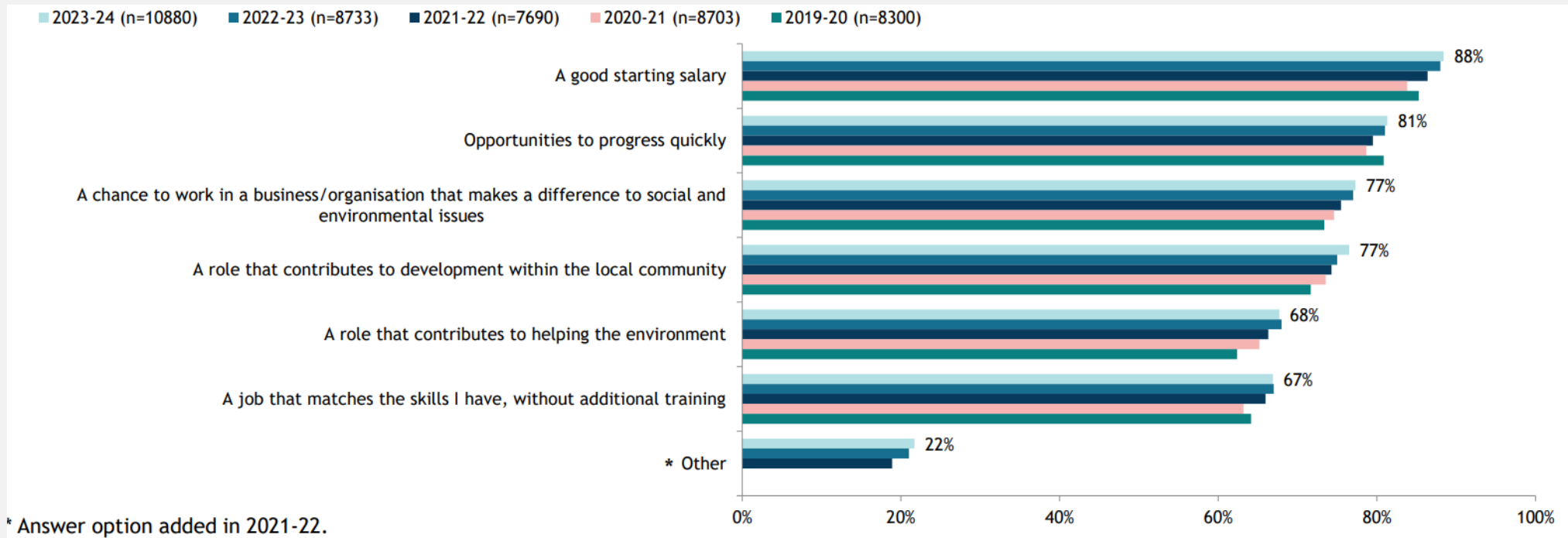


Only 26% of respondents report sustainable development as being covered in **depth** in their course

Source: 2020 SOS-International Skills Survey of over 7000 students

Factors affecting students' career choice

Over 75% of UK Higher Education students said that the chance to work an organization that has a positive social-environmental impact would be an important factor when applying for jobs. A similar proportion also reported that the chance to work in a position that contributes to local communities would have an influence too.



Source: SOS-UK Skills Survey 2023-2024. Sample size = 11,300+ students

Green skills and green jobs

SOS-International Green Skills and Green Jobs Global Consultation

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Consulted over 1100 young people in 56 countries in 2024 to understand what green skills and green jobs meant to them and what they wish to see from educators, employers, and policymakers in the future. Organised by SOS- International and United Nations Environment Programme as part of the Green Jobs for Youth Pact.

Key messages:

- 1) Young people understand green skills to be interdisciplinary and inclusive of both technical and ‘softer’ skills
- 2) All jobs can be green jobs
- 3) Young people must be at the heart of decision making and have their voices and lived experiences inform action at all levels

What are green skills?

Green skills are the necessary **knowledge, attributes and competencies** to create a fairer, more sustainable future for all. Green skills are **interdisciplinary**, and must include **both technical and soft skills**, such as critical thinking, problem solving, systems thinking and digital skills.

Green skills are a **golden thread** that weave through **multiple knowledge systems**, including science, technology, engineering, mathematics, the arts, humanities, and local and Indigenous ways of knowing.

Source: SOS-International Green Skills and Green Jobs Global Consultation Report (2024)

Examples of green/sustainability skills

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Using resources efficiently to limit the impact on the environment and other people

Looking at global problems from the perspective of people from around the world

Considering ethical issues linked to your subject

Ability to identify root causes of inequality

Understanding how to create change

Understanding how human activity is harming nature

Challenging the way we do things now (like business, politics, education)

Solving problems by thinking about whole systems - including different connections and interactions

Communicating complex information clearly and effectively to different types of people

Understanding how to lead on change

Looking at a problem using information from different subjects or disciplines

Planning for the long term, as well as the short term

What are green jobs?

Green jobs are roles that **promote sustainability, aim to conserve the environment, and respond to the climate and ecological emergency.** Green jobs will foster a sustainable future for ourselves and for future generations. We recognise that **almost all jobs can be orientated towards being a green job** and sustainability knowledge should be considered a necessity for every job description.

Source: SOS-International Green Skills and Green Jobs Global Consultation Report (2024)

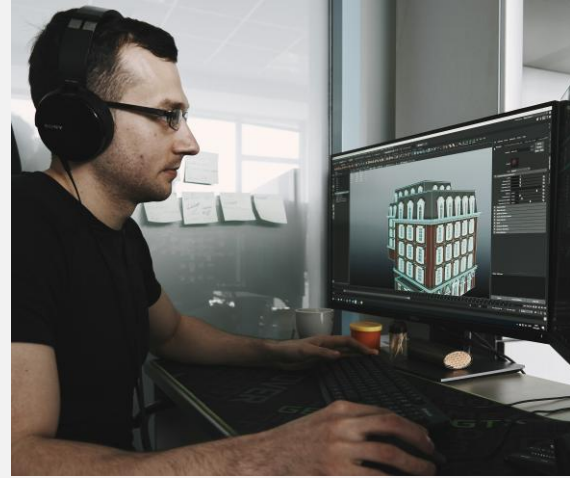
What makes these a “green job”?

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What makes these a “green job”?

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Sustainability values and attributes

Education for Sustainable Development

“Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) gives learners of all ages the **knowledge, skills, values** and **agency** to address **interconnected** global **challenges** including climate change, loss of biodiversity, unsustainable use of resources, and inequality. ESD is a **lifelong** learning process. It is an integral part of quality education and encompasses learning content, outcomes, and the learning environment itself.”

UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) 2023

Education for Sustainable Development

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Head (knowledge)

E.g., social, economic, environmental and cultural pillars of sustainability, local knowledge, traditional ecological knowledge, etc.



Hands (skills)

E.g., transferable skills gained from volunteering, college, university, work, apprenticeships etc.



Heart (values)

E.g., beliefs, behaviours, principles, culture, values, what gets you out of bed!

Calls to action



Advice for finding a green job

Finding opportunities

- College/university careers services, careers fairs, green jobs boards
- Networking, attending events, researching employers
- Sharing opportunities with friends/colleagues
- Following organisations' social media and activities
- Keyword-searching, Green Careers Hub [jargon buster](#)
- Setup RSS feeds for automated notifications of new roles, email updates
- Taking care and your wellbeing
- Recommended resources*

Communicating your skills in applications

Communicating your skills in applications and interviews

- STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result)
- Real-world examples e.g., in college/university, jobs, volunteering, extra-curricular, sports, faith groups, campaigning, symposium and more
- Leaving a positive, lasting impression, what makes you stand-out?
- Prepare questions
- Interviews as a conversation with a purpose
- Passion!

STAR example for communicating sustainability skills in a job interview

Question: "Tell us an example of how you have successfully delivered a project"

- **Situation:** As a researcher for the Responsible Futures programme at my university, I examined how top-down buy-in and bottom-up advocacy drive climate action in higher education, considering the balance between diverse stakeholders and their interests.
- **Task:** I was responsible for communicating my research to different stakeholders such as students and academic staff.
- **Action:** I applied my attention to detail skills to write formal reports tailored to different audiences, for example by using precise and professional language for senior leaders. I also analysed five university strategic reports, comparing their activities with the SDGs and recorded their real-world impact. I then applied skills that I've learnt during my college and university courses in communicating complex information to a non-specialist audience, by creating infographics on Canva so that the findings were more digestible and engaging for students.
- **Result:** My research highlighted the importance of integrating sustainability holistically into education systems, while also identifying ethical issues like university partnerships with fossil fuel companies. It also progressed initiatives such as community art projects, international collaborations during COP, and student-led campaigns like the successful £2 sustainable meal deal on campus.

STAR practice

Question: Tell us an example of how you have successfully taken part in or delivered a project

You can use your experience of attending the symposium (or another event or make one up).

Add your response to the Padlet using the S.T.A.R framework*

Share your STAR examples in breakout rooms

Embedding sustainability in any role

Advice for embedding sustainability in any role

- Being open to continuous improvement - sustainability is a lifelong journey
- Identifying power relations and leveraging spheres of influence
- Reflect on scales of action: daily responsibilities, team/collective, organisational, sector, and structural
- Ways of working, digital sustainability
- Leading by example
- Curiosity

Advice for embedding sustainability in any role

Issues to consider:

- Biodiversity, water, waste, animal rights, land use, greenhouse gas emissions, built environment etc
- Colleagues, customers, clients, suppliers, local communities, trade unions
- Banking, investments, pensions
- Human rights, social and environmental justice
- Greenwashing

Advice for embedding sustainability in any role

Project Drawdown's Sustainable Job Function Guides

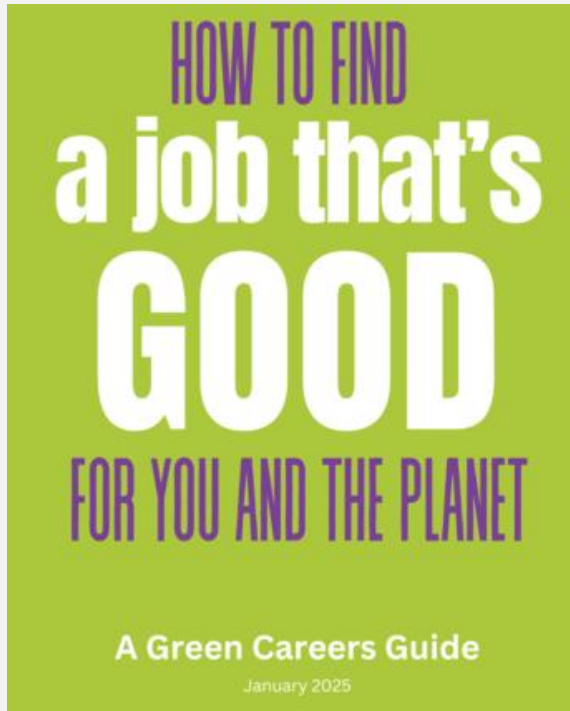


How can staff support green upskilling?

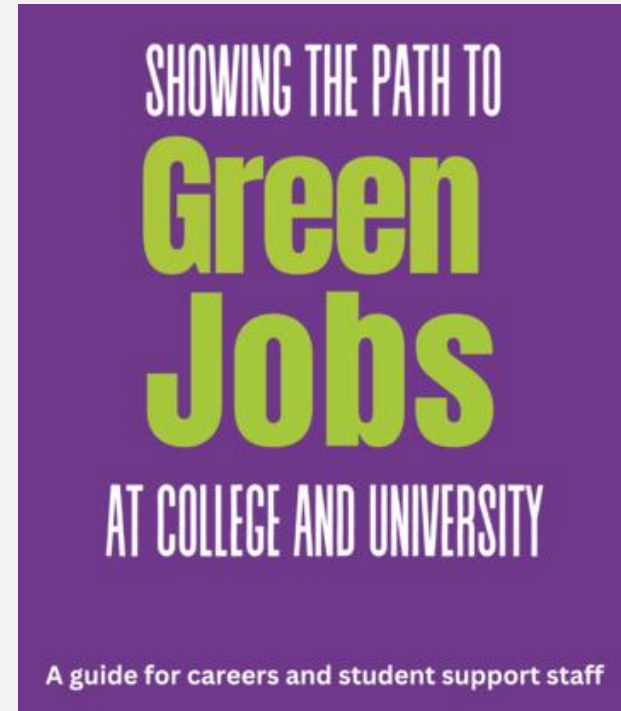
- Myth-busting
 - E.g., “green jobs are only about renewable energy or reducing emissions”
 - E.g., “you must have a specialist qualification to get any green job”
- Personalising and making sustainability feel more relatable to students’ disciplines, interests, priorities, and goals - get creative!
- Open dialogue, sharing lived experience, learning the barriers and inequities different groups can or have faced and supporting them
- Integrate holistic sustainability into teaching methods, assessment, learning environment, institutional policies, career services, Continuing Professional Development, industry and stakeholder relationships

Advice for embedding sustainability in any role

**EAUC Green Careers
Guide (2025)**



**EAUC green careers
guide for staff (2025)**



A note on privilege

- It is a privilege to be able to be selective about employment.
- Barriers exist that prevent or reduce the ability for some people to be hired and/or apply for their preferred roles.
- Importance of allyship and going beyond individualism.
- Take some time to reflect on some of the actions we've discussed - what situations might mean somebody is not able to do these?

Green career stories

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Green skills and careers



Understanding your growth: How you can contribute to sustainability through your current, or future career?



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4: Tree - Fully fledged understanding



1: Sowing the seeds - New to this idea



3: Sapling - Solid grasp

Resources and further learning



References and resources

- [SOS-International Green Skills and Green Jobs Report \(2024\)](#)
- [EAUC Green Careers Guide \(2025\)](#)
- [EAUC Showing the path to green jobs for FHE staff \(2025\)](#)
- [The Racial Action for the Climate Agency Report website](#)
- [LinkedIn Global Green Skills Report \(2024\)](#)
- [UNESCO what you need to know about ESD \(2024\)](#)
- [Project Drawdown job function guides - all jobs can be climate jobs](#)
- [Jargon buster archive - Green Careers Hub](#)
- [Green Jobs for Nature website with resources, advice, and how to find opportunities/vacancies](#)
- [Using LinkedIn as a networking tool A CIEEM Guide](#)
- [Learning to transform the world: key competencies in education for sustainable development - UNESCO Digital Library](#)

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Thank you!



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