

10 Simple change tools



This section offers some simple tools and questions to help you begin to make changes happen.

The sustainability agenda requires a response, and many academics – and indeed, increasingly whole institutions – are taking steps to rethink and redesign teaching and learning strategies and programmes to take account of it. While change at this level may be difficult and complex, small steps can often be made that can in time lead to deeper change.

This section offers some simple frameworks and prompts that can be used to stimulate thinking about how change processes towards ESD can be initiated.

10.1 The '4 Rs model'

This is a very simple but effective 'first step' model.

With sustainability in mind: take any document at any level – from university corporate plan to lecture plan, and anything in between (e.g. teaching and learning strategy; faculty policy, programme aims and objectives, etc.) – then use this simple model to assess, evaluate and discuss possible changes with appropriate colleagues.

Regarding **what we do now**:

- What is of value that we need to **keep**?
- 'It is useful, valid, up to date and relevant.'
- **Retain**

- What might need **modification**?
- 'It is partly all the above – but needs some updating or revision.'
- **Revise**

- What, if anything, might we need to **abandon**?
- 'It's outdated or no longer relevant or valid.'
- **Reject**

- What **new ideas**, concepts, principles, methodologies, working methods, pedagogies, etc. are needed?
- 'We need to innovate and bring in new material.'
- **Renew**

This can be used as a tool for helping audit existing provision (see Appendix 6 ‘A basic ESD audit tool’) and to inform discussion with colleagues.

10.2 Four key questions: getting the discussion going

These questions can be used as a basis for discussion and reflection on an individual, group or institutional level.

1. In what ways do you currently include or promote sustainability concepts, values and skills in your curriculum area?

- What is the student view?
- What are your main achievements or successes to date?

2. What more could you/would you like to do?

- In what way(s) could you contribute more effectively and directly to student learning in relation to sustainability?

3. What opportunities and barriers are there currently?

- What factors are assisting you in this, and which are hindering progress?

4. What kinds of support might you need to take this work further?

- What needs to change to help you go further, and/or what support might you need?

See Appendix 6 ‘A basic ESD audit tool’ to help with this process.

10.3 What can I do today, next week ...?

Engagement can be at any level from minor to major change – depending on what’s possible and appropriate in your circumstances. For example:

1. **What you can do today** – introduce a ten or 20 minute ‘podule’ on some aspect of sustainability or ask your students to present on some aspect of sustainability that affects their lives.
2. **What you can within a week or two** – make minor modifications to your teaching within your existing module(s).
3. **What you can do in a few months** – revise existing modules to take account of sustainability.
4. **What you can do over a year or so** – redesign programmes for validation.

10.4 Curriculum strategies

In sum, try one or more of these:

- introduce new 'podules' (see above);
- minor modifications to your teaching or modules;
- put ESD in PDP;
- cross-disciplinary and extra-curricular events;
- dissertations, projects and workplace learning placements;
- infuse sustainability in assessment;
- develop new modules;
- generic or common modules;
- new programmes;
- invite external speakers in;
- mount extra-curricular events, film showings, lectures etc.