

+ Embedding ethical and sustainable employability in tertiary education: best practice examples

A pan-Wales HE project

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Executive summary

This report is the culmination of a task and finish group designated from the Medr and Advance HE Community of Practice (CoP) for Employability. For the academic year 2024-25 the CoP prioritised two key areas through task and complete groups, one of which was Ethical and Sustainable Employability (ESE). As global priorities shift towards sustainability and social responsibility, tertiary education must equip graduates with the skills to thrive in a purpose-driven job market. As such, the ESE group was tasked with reviewing the critical role universities play in shaping ethically conscious and sustainable career paths for students. Included in this, the group was tasked with exploring best practices in integrating sustainability into curricula, fostering responsible career development and partnering with industries that share these values.

The project ran between March and mid-June 2025 and used a case study/best practice data gathering approach via email and word of mouth. Each project member sent the template to various contacts within their own institutions and to select external stakeholders. Examples were analysed using thematic analysis.

In total, 49 case studies were collated during the data gathering exercise from institutions in Wales. The report identifies the contribution of these to ethical and sustainable employability and evaluates the initiatives, including key benefits and areas for improvement or future action and key insights. The report finds that through curriculum innovation, extra-curricular initiatives and employer engagement, educators are forging connections between employability, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and, in Wales, the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015). At the same time, the report identifies ongoing challenges, especially in relation to financial constraints and workload pressures. Key recommendations focus on the development of a toolkit, collaboration and communication, and future projects.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is the culmination of a task and finish group designated from the Medr and Advance HE Community of Practice (CoP) for Employability. The CoP aims to inform strategic policy decisions on employability and skills in Wales and to empower and share good practice across the sector. To do this, the CoP aims to enhance the quality and provision of employability support, both within and beyond the curriculum. For the academic year 2024-25, the CoP prioritised two key areas through task and complete groups, one of which was Ethical and Sustainable Employability (ESE).

As global priorities shift towards sustainability and social responsibility, tertiary education must equip graduates with the skills to thrive in a purpose-driven job market. As such, the ESE group was tasked with reviewing the critical role universities play in shaping ethically conscious and sustainable career paths for students. Included in this, the group was tasked with exploring best practices in integrating sustainability into curricula, fostering responsible career development, and partnering with industries that share these values. As part of this project the ESE group was expected to:

- + work remotely and collaboratively to identify suitable points for a minimum of three meetings within the year separate to the CoP
- + prepare appropriate materials (this could include, but not be limited to, a survey, report, presentation, case study etc)
- + update and maintain all aspect of the project within the online portal (Connect) CoP space, providing bi-weekly updates
- + prepare a digital precis report
- + present the findings at a CoP meeting on 10 June 2025.

2 Ethical and sustainable employability

2.1 Introduction

The tertiary education sector holds a pivotal role in preparing students to meet the demands of an increasingly complex and interconnected global landscape. Despite growing recognition of this responsibility, efforts to embed education aligned with global challenges have historically been fragmented and inconsistent across institutions (United Nations, 2024). To respond effectively to this challenge, there is a clear and urgent need to systematically integrate ethics, sustainability and concepts such as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into tertiary education. Doing so will equip students with the necessary knowledge, competencies and values to contribute meaningfully to addressing global goals and delivering long-term public and societal value (UNESCO, 2024).

2.2 Definitions

In order to ensure that stakeholders from across Wales, who were contacted regarding this project, had a similar understanding of what ethical and sustainable employability means, the project group undertook a desk-based scoping exercise of various definitions. As a result of this, the Education for Sustainable Development and Advance HE definitions (shown below) were chosen to define what was meant by “ethical and sustainable employability”.

- + *“ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning, and is an integral part of quality education. ESD is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society.” (UNESCO, 2021, p8).*
- + *ESD “equips learners with the knowledge, competencies and values to tackle interconnected global challenges and have a positive impact on economic, social and environmental sustainability.” (Advance HE, 2024, p2).*
- + *It is also described by Advance HE and QAA as “the process of creating curriculum structures and subject-relevant content to support and enact sustainable development.” (QAA and Advance HE, 2021, p2)*

It is interesting to note that, during informal conversations, some stakeholders interpreted ethical and sustainable employability to mean career longevity and ethical business. While these are important concepts that are a focus for practitioners, policymakers and academics alike, this was not within the scope or focus of this project. Instead, this project had a clear

focus on gathering best practice examples of how ethical and sustainable skills and competencies are being developed within tertiary education.

2.3 Frameworks and initiatives: global challenges

Numerous international frameworks and initiatives have been developed to support sustainable development efforts. Therefore it is important to understand what these are and their importance to the education sector. One cornerstone is the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015 by all UN member states. The SDGs comprise 17 global goals aimed at addressing urgent challenges – including poverty, health, education, gender equality and climate action – by 2030. While not legally binding, countries are expected to take ownership and implement national frameworks to achieve the goals (United Nations, 2015). The SDGs are widely used in education as a tool for teaching global responsibility. However, recent assessments show the world is significantly off-track in achieving these goals, underscoring the need to prepare students for ongoing and post-2030 sustainability challenges (UNESCO, 2024).

In Wales, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFGA) provides a unique legal framework aimed at improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the nation. The Act sets out seven wellbeing goals, aligned with the SDGs, which public bodies – including government departments, local authorities and health boards – are required to pursue. These include:

- 1 A prosperous Wales
- 2 A resilient Wales
- 3 A healthier Wales
- 4 A more equal Wales
- 5 A Wales of cohesive communities
- 6 A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- 7 A globally responsible Wales

While targeted at the public sector, the WFGA has relevance beyond it and serves as a useful framework for contextualising sustainability within education, especially in Wales.

2.4 The role of tertiary education

Education institutions are uniquely positioned to drive progress toward sustainable development. According to UNESCO, education institutions can contribute significantly to the SDGs through research, innovation, stakeholder engagement and the development of human capital (UNESCO, 2024). The Berlin Declaration (UNESCO, 2022) calls for a deepened commitment to ESD, recognising education as a foundational tool for transformation and sustainability.

Effective integration of ESD requires a whole-institution approach, encompassing curriculum design, teaching practices, governance and community partnerships (Advance HE, 2024). While many institutions are beginning to actively embed ESD, more needs to be done as this is increasingly becoming a baseline expectation among students. Research indicates that 91% of students are concerned about climate change and want it reflected in their courses (Climate Commission for Higher and Further Education, 2021). The inclusion of global challenges and sustainability principles is no longer an optional enhancement – it is a core element of preparing students for employment and responsible global citizenship in a rapidly changing world.

Although there are frameworks and guidelines that exist to aid tertiary education in achieving these aims (such as the Advance HE and Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's Education for Sustainable Development Guidance (QAA and Advance HE, 2021), UN PRME Blueprint for SDG Integration into Curriculum (PRME, 2020) and Education for Sustainable Development Curriculum Design Toolkit (Higgins and Calvert, 2025)) there is a need for an accessible and easy to use toolkit providing educators with best practice case studies they can implement within their own institutions. This report aims to be the starting point for this with the report acting as an overview of the project. A toolkit providing a continuum of best practice examples, ranging in ease of implementation and resource requirements, and details of how to implement these in practice, will be produced to sit alongside this report.

3 Methodological approach

3.1 Qualitative case study-based approach

The project ran between March and mid June 2025, with six task and finish group meetings being held in total. Due to the timeframe a case study/best practice data-gathering approach was chosen rather than interviews or surveys. The chosen research design was document analysis of case studies and best practice examples obtained through email contact and word of mouth. The research team generated a template (see Appendix 1) that was sent out to each institution and chosen external stakeholders asking for examples of best practice with regard to ethical and sustainable employability. Each project member sent the template to contacts within their own institutions (for example, employability leads, careers services, enterprise and entrepreneurship services, programme directors, academic staff) and also sent the template to select external stakeholders (such as the Welsh Joint Education Committee and the Future Generations Commissioners Office). Data was gathered via email with the opportunity to share resources/images etc related to each example submitted.

The project aimed to gather examples from across all Welsh institutions and those that spanned: curricular, extra-curricular, careers service and event focus, enterprise and entrepreneurship, further education (FE) institutions and wider stakeholders. However, most of the examples provided were from higher education (HE) institutions with only two examples from FE provided in the timeframe given. This is important to consider when reviewing the data collected and findings. Gathering examples from more FE institutions and external stakeholders will form part of an ongoing project.

3.2 Ethical approval

Ethical approval was sought and gained through the lead institution (Swansea University). The ethical approval covered all other HE institutions involved in the project team and was gained to enable consent for the examples to be shared. The ethical approval document can be supplied upon request.

3.3 Data analysis

Convenience sampling was used to collate best practice examples from all institutions. This was due to the nature and timeframe of the project. These examples were collected using the form in Appendix 1 and transferred into a spreadsheet before being analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). A summary of all 49 projects can be found in the Appendix 2 table. Information for each case study was coded using initial and second order coding as per the coding tables in Appendix 3 and emergent themes were identified relevant to ethical and sustainable employability.

4 Findings

4.1 Ethical and sustainable employability initiatives

A table summarising all best practice examples from this project can be found in Appendix 2. In total, 49 case studies were collated during the data gathering exercise from institutions in Wales. The sustainable and ethical employability examples ranged from 1) teaching and learning activities, courses and resources, 2) student projects, 3) assessment methods, 4) staff training and support, 5) student feedback, 6) student support, 7) events, 8) employability resources, 9) competitions, 10) awards, qualifications and funding, 11) policies, 12) networks and forums. Figure 1 summarises the initiatives and highlights how many from each theme were provided.

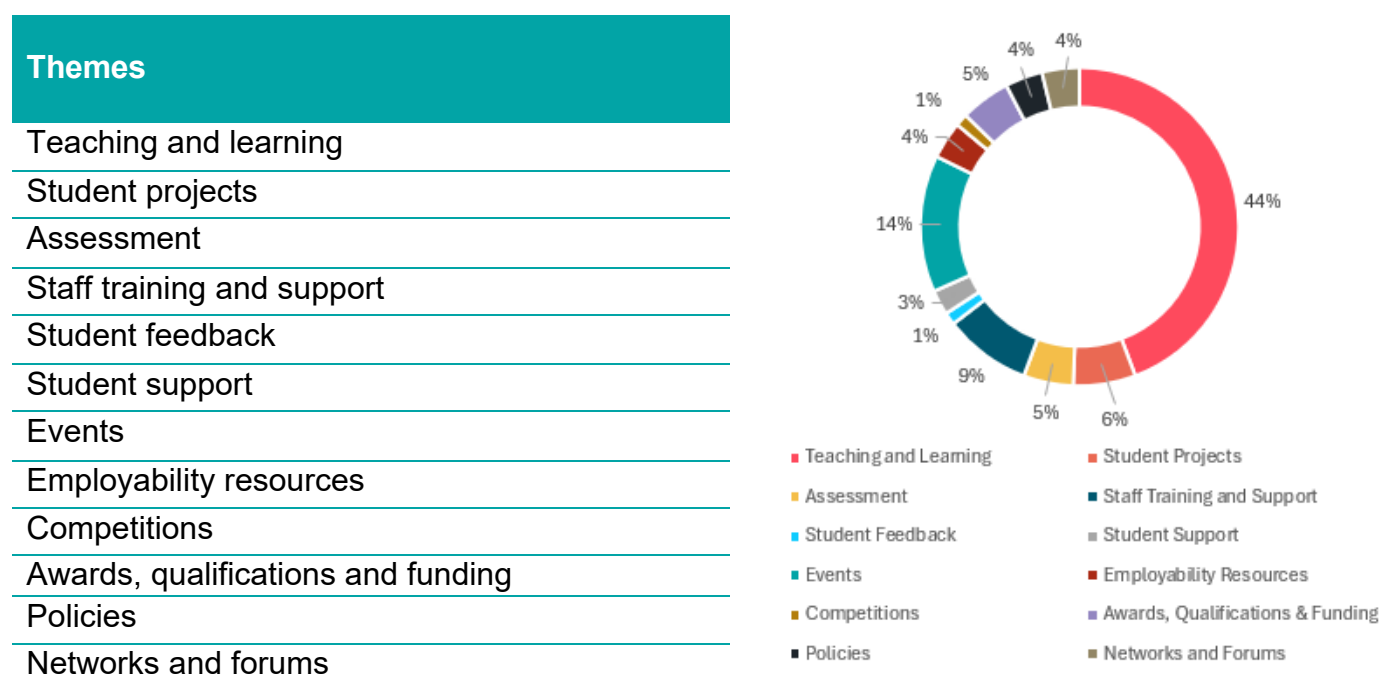


Figure 1. Ethical and sustainable employability initiatives

Teaching and learning

Initiatives most commonly aligned with teaching and learning were in the form of modules, seminar, lecture and workshop content and activities, assessment methods, student projects, educational resources and extra curricula courses. For example, modules such as 'Environmental and Sustainable Management', 'Ethics in Engineering' and 'Embedding Green Approaches within Media Practice' from Swansea University, 'Embedding UN SDGs and WFGA (2015) as Drivers for Research in Biotechnology' and 'Behaviour Change' from Aberystwyth University, 'Regaining Paradise: Sustainability in the Early Years' from UWTSD and 'Sustainable Geoscience', and 'Environmental History' from Cardiff University.

Seminar, lecture and workshop content were the most common initiatives to be reported on as relevant to ethical and sustainable employability. Examples include the 'Embedding Sustainability into Law' lecture and 'Marketing for Good' seminar delivered in collaboration with industry at Swansea University, 'Sustainability Finance and ESG' seminar from Bangor University and the 'Sustainable Development and Managing with Nature' and 'Places of Climate Change' lectures delivered by Cardiff University. The 'MSc Pre-registration Physiotherapy and Occupational therapy workshops' also included content to build knowledge of sustainable practices in the healthcare sector.



Spotlight

Institution: University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Title: Regaining Paradise: Sustainability in the Early Years

- + This initiative relates to a module within the Early Years Education and Care Degree at the university. The module has integrated the John Muir Award as well as other practical experiences to support students' understanding of key concepts, while using an experiential pedagogy.
- + To enable the students to take part in the award, the module lead registers and pays a membership fee of £66 annually.
- + The method of evaluation for the module is the students' feedback and reflection on the experience, in addition to an exploration of the information collected as part of the John Muir Award.
- + Students undertaking a career within Early Years Education and Care will have learned the importance of sustainable and ethical issues and gaining skills in this area. Moreover, acting as positive role models for children, parents and other professionals.

It is anticipated that e-learning courses such as the Swansea University 'Climate and Carbon' course and the Open University's 'You, Me and the Future of Wales' will be invaluable as the digital landscape of tertiary education evolves. Multi-disciplinary networks and forums such as Wrexham University's 'Ecological Citizen Network' and 'Sustainability Action Forum' also have a part to play to promote collaboration.



Spotlight

Institution: Wrexham University

Title: Ecological Citizen(s) Network +

This initiative is based at the Royal College of Art, which is in collaboration with Wrexham University and the Stockholm Environment Institute at University of York. The purpose of this initiative is to explore and catalyse ecological citizenship for positive climate action in a sustainable digital society. This can be through research, the network, funding schemes, events and activities.

This four-year research network aims to explore and develop ways that people can turn ideas into action and foster ecological awareness and sustainable practices within their communities and environments.

The transdisciplinary team involved in the network allows for a diverse range of skills and knowledge, all with the objective of working towards a preferable future for all.

Assessment and student projects

Assessment was another theme identified during the data collection, with a distinct focus on innovative methods and the development of graduate attributes such as group work, problem solving, written communication skills and the application of practical and real-world problems within relevant industry settings. Student projects also featured heavily as important methods to enhance sustainable and ethical employability – for example, projects set by industry stakeholders such as ‘Marketing for Good’ and the capstone ‘Business Projects’ at Swansea University. Group projects such as ‘Ethics in Engineering’ at Swansea University, the ‘MSc Pre-Registration Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy’ group projects at Cardiff University, the Open University student-led SDG curriculum audit research project and Wrexham University’s ‘Living Lab Project’ were also referred to.



Spotlight

Institution: Swansea University School of Management

Title: Marketing for Good Project

This initiative was embedded within a Level 5 undergraduate module titled 'Digital Marketing' that integrated industry-linked assessed projects based on live briefs set by external third sector clients. Throughout the term, students engaged with these clients, combining academic lectures with practical industry skills development in lab settings.

Campaigns were judged by the clients and academic team, and awards were given, incurring a cost for the ceremony for trophies (funded by their employability team) and refreshments. Free digital tools were used including Canva, Leonardo and Semrush.

Ways of evaluating this initiative included student feedback scores and direct client feedback, unsolicited social media feedback, as well as the work quality from students.

The tasks allowed students to gain practical experience enhancing employability, recognition was given for their work, and real impact was apparent from the feedback which was gathered.

Staff training and support

Staff training and support is essential to contribute towards ethical and sustainable employability. Examples identified in the findings included a staff development workshop in support of Cardiff University's 'Sustainability Toolkit' and its 'Ethics, Values and Sustainability Working Group', the Swansea University SALT 'Embedding Sustainability and the Climate Emergency into Higher Education Curricula' Canvas Course and online 'Climate and Carbon E-learn Course'. The Open University's 'Inner Development Goals Go Green' event for staff and 'Learning Design Sustainability Skills Cards' as per the Responsible by Design (RBD) framework are further contributions to staff training to encourage relevant content and skills within education.



Spotlight

Institution: Swansea University Sustainability Team

Title: Online Climate and Carbon E-Learn Course

This initiative was created by the Swansea University Sustainability Team, providing a high-level understanding of carbon and climate change alongside specific institution examples.

The course takes one to two hours and can be accessed by staff, students and stakeholders of the university. The development of the online course on Canvas was supported by HEDFW/Medr funding, but it has no cost to those completing the e-learning.

Once completed and a pledge to reduce carbon emissions has been made, the learner can gain a certificate and e-badge on request. The number of requests can be used as the method of evaluation and success measurement.

Due to the short but highly informative format of the course, it can be easily implemented into courses, degree programmes and extra-curricular activities. Students develop knowledge and skills which will be invaluable moving forward with their careers, and it provides staff with the training to be able to make an impact within their place of work.

Student feedback, support, events and competitions

Student feedback involved examples such as Swansea University's 'Student Sustainability Survey', providing an opportunity for students to reflect on the taught content of their degree programmes in relation to sustainability, ethics and climate action, while contributing feedback for curriculum development. Support was also offered through teaching initiatives, student societies, events and competitions. For example, the 'Creative Community Engagement Initiative' and 'Sustainability Challenge' hosted by Aberystwyth University, the Open University 'Sustainathon' and the Swansea University 'Circular Economy Student Society', 'WFGA (2015) Hackathon' and International 'Invent for the Planet Hackathon'. Competitions such as the Open University 'Business Creators Fund' and John Muir award also promote engagement with sustainable development, ethics and the development of graduate attributes.



Spotlight

Institution: Open University

Title: Sustainathon

This initiative is a one-week online challenge for STEM students to work together in groups towards finding a solution for a real-world sustainability challenge. The challenges are set by partnering employers and charities where impact can be made.

The event has no cost to the current students and graduates (of up to three years) who are taking part.

Success is measured by the feedback provided by students and partnering organisations, including how satisfied they were with the event, and the experience and skills gained. Charities evaluate the solutions given by the students to see how well the process works.

The main benefits include the hands-on experience, the opportunity for effective, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the impact this event can have on the broader society.

Careers-led employability initiatives

Employability-specific resources and initiatives included the 'Finding Sustainable Work' student workshop delivered by the employability team at Swansea University and the 'Sustainability Challenge' workshops delivered by Aberystwyth University as part of its CareerFest. The 'Employer Sustainability Toolkit', 'Fulfilling Futures in Environment, 'You, Me and the Future of Wales' e-Learning resource, 'Sustainability Forum', the 'Regenerator: Green Careers' digital video resources, 'Inner Development Goals Go-Green Event' and 'Medru Digital Skills Factory' provided by the Open University are all best practice examples to prepare diverse stakeholders for the adaptability of the future landscape. Finally, Cardiff University's 'Ethics, Values and Sustainability Working Group' and Wrexham University's 'Sustainable Skills for Brighter Futures', 'Living Lab Project' and 'Sustainability Action Forum' also contribute specifically towards sustainable and ethical employability.



Spotlight

Institution: Open University

Title: Employer Sustainability Toolkit

This initiative supports employers in embedding sustainability into their recruitment, workplace practices and talent development strategies. It recognises that the future of work must align with environmental and social responsibility, so a set of practical tools and guidance has been developed.

It includes two free resources for employers to access online, on the Open University OpportunityHub. It has been developed by colleagues from the Employer Engagement Team and Marketing Communications within the Careers and Employability Services.

This initiative will be evaluated through qualitative and quantitative feedback from employers, showing the level of influence experienced. Internal staff will provide insights into the quality and outcomes of employer interactions. Student feedback will also be gathered to understand the perceived visibility and appeal of sustainable roles promoted through the initiative.

Benefits are that employers will become more aware of how they can embed sustainability within their practices to create positive environmental and social impact for the future. The toolkit ensures that sustainability is not treated as an add-on, but as a core element of meaningful and responsible employment.

Policies, awards, qualifications and funding

Policies were identified as important for sustainable and ethical employability, with specific examples including the Ethical Careers Policy in Swansea University, Aberystwyth University and Wrexham University. These provide staff, students and external organisations with clarity in relation to careers and employability, and evidence alignment with ethical and sustainable values. Awards and qualifications such as the extra-curricular Online Climate and Carbon Training certificate and e-badge at Swansea University and the WJEC further education qualifications for sustainability covering the SDGs and WFGA (2015) further contribute, with funding such as the Open University Business Creators Fund and Cardiff Metropolitan University's Employability Support Fund providing an additional motivation to engage with ethical and sustainable employability initiatives.



Spotlight

Institution: Aberystwyth University

Title: Ethical Careers Policy

This initiative is a policy designed to ensure that Aberystwyth University's Careers and Employability service aligns with ethical and sustainable values. It is guided by the university's Sustainability Policy and Net Zero Carbon 2030 Strategy, aiming to promote responsible recruitment and career opportunities.

Aims include:

- + exclusion of certain industries including fossil fuel companies, mining corporations and tobacco producers
- + promotion of sustainability
- + ensuring safe and fair employment
- + fair pay for internships
- + funding sustainability initiatives such as the CareerFest and Sustainability Conference.

As a result of the policy, students are more aware of these aims, making more sustainable and ethical choices in their future pathways.

4.2 Contribution to ethical and sustainable employability

The themes identified in this report highlight significant activity across the sector in advancing ethical and sustainable approaches to employability, as shown in Figure 2. Institutions are increasingly embedding values-led practice into careers education, student development and employer engagement. This shift reflects a growing recognition that graduate success must be understood not only in economic terms, but also through the lens of social responsibility, equity and long-term impact. This section analyses the specific contributions these activities have made to promoting ethical and sustainable employability across higher education.

Themes
Skills development
Knowledge and understanding
Introduction to frameworks
Sustainability and ethics in practice

Figure 2. Contribution to ethical and sustainable employability

Skills development

The development of skills and graduate attributes was a dominant theme for all the initiatives. For example, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, data analytics, ethical decision-making, group work, innovation, reflection, digital skills, practical skills and systems thinking were referred to as skills developed by a variety of stakeholders. Competency frameworks such as the eight UNESCO ESD Competencies (Rieckmann, 2018) and Inner Development Goals (IDGs) (Inner Development Goals, nd, Ankrah et al, 2023) are seen broadly as the dimensions and skills that students require in order to move societies towards sustainable development in the future, often referred to as ‘green skills’ (Rieckmann, 2012; Wiek, Withycombe and Redman, 2011). The United Nations (2024) claims that there is a lack of inner capacity to deal with increasingly complex environmental and societal challenges, therefore the alignment of initiatives with employability skills is vital moving forward.



Spotlight

Institution: Cardiff University
Title: Ethics, Values and Sustainability working group

In March 2024, Student Futures established an Ethics, Values and Sustainability working group as a step in their strategic commitment. With the input of key stakeholders, the group works to develop a range of resources which give ethics, values and sustainability a high profile in career choice.

Activities and events achieved include:

- + ‘Ethics and Your Career’, a digital resource hosted on the university’s employability platform, Student Futures+

- + sustainability element added to our employability award – The Cardiff Award
- + working with employers to co-create initiatives and activities to further promote green careers to students such as ‘Environmental Careers Challenge’ and Employer Meet and Greet.

Success is measured through engagement numbers, feedback scores, qualitative impact and outputs delivered.

This initiative allows students to feel empowered with their value alignment to career choices, it gives practical resources to students, diverse stakeholders have the opportunity to collaborate, and students can engage with employers.

Knowledge, understanding and frameworks

Enhancing knowledge and understanding of various stakeholders such as children, students, staff, communities and industry was a key pursuit towards ethical and sustainable employability. Part of this process involved the introduction of core topics such as ethics, sustainability and climate action, and frameworks such as the UN SDGs, the WFGA (2015), Education for Sustainable Development framework, UNESCO Competencies, Inner Development Goals, Ways of Working and the Five Pillars of Sustainable Development (people, prosperity, peace, partnership and planet).



Spotlight

Institution: WJEC

Title: Further Education Qualifications on Sustainability

This range of qualifications is currently offered via FE institutions such as NPTC Group of Colleges and Coleg Sir Gar, and was developed in collaboration with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) Commissioner's Office.

Examples of how FE institutions are using the qualification:

- + NPTC Group of Colleges – currently delivering within an Introduction to AS Programme. They are hoping to map it into a Delivering Renewables programme that Level 2 and Level 3 Engineering students are completing

- + Coleg Sir Gar – piloting with a group of Level 1 / Level 2 Performance Arts students – they are currently organising a trip to BBC Cymru to have a bespoke tour that focuses on the BBC's sustainable practices.

These qualifications are designed to directly link to both the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. They aim to teach students about these frameworks and how they can be practically applied in their workplace.

Sustainability and ethics in practice

The application of sustainability and ethics knowledge to practical and real-world contexts was an essential component of many initiatives – for example, through taught content, assessment, case studies, industry and group projects, events, Hackathons, games, student societies, guest speakers and training courses. Real-world applicability and appreciation of the relevance of sustainable and ethical employment allowed for an opportunity for stakeholders to reflect on their individual impact and how this contributes more broadly to society. This impact can be realised through ethical employment and green careers.



Spotlight

Institution: Bangor University

Title: Places of Climate Change (PloCC)

Various stakeholders from across the University can become involved with meetings, thematic sub-groups and activities organised by the PloCC Research Centre. It acts as a hub where projects inspire staff and students towards future activities and employment in the area of environmental sustainability, both within and outside academia.

PloCC has a membership structure including a management board, regular members and associated members.

PloCC is usually measured by the continuous actions that take place and the attendance of activities. It can also be evaluated by the number of people engaging with resources.

Ethics and sustainability are at the heart of PloCC's principles and it gives people the chance to connect through these values. Engagement with PloCC and its associated projects amounts to training in ethical and sustainable action across various work environments, within and beyond academia.

4.3 Evaluation of initiatives

The ethical and sustainable employability initiatives collated from institutions across Wales were evaluated using different methods, as shown in Figure 3. For example, various types of feedback, initiative engagement metrics, initiative outcomes and institutional performance indicators.

Themes
Feedback
Initiative engagement
Initiative outcomes
Institutional performance

Figure 3. Evaluation of initiatives

- + **Initiative feedback:** feedback was sought from a variety of stakeholders such as students, staff, employers and participants across all initiatives. This ranged from module feedback, social media feedback, event feedback, employer feedback, staff feedback, initiative reviews and feedback as part of the curriculum review process.
- + **Initiative engagement:** engagement metrics were commonly used as an evaluation tool, but these were usually context dependent, differing across initiatives. Examples varied from attendance numbers, student numbers, module recruitment, employer numbers, staff numbers, resource views, resource uptake, resource reuse and diversity of students participating in initiatives.
- + **Initiative outcomes:** specific initiative outcomes were often used as a basis for evaluation – for example, student understanding, learning outcomes, quality of work, assessment outcomes, student grades, completion rates, project outputs, graduate outcomes and related study uptake.
- + **Institutional performance:** performance indicators were also used to benchmark to evaluate an institution's commitment to ethical and sustainable employability. For example – student attainment figures, ratings and contribution to league tables such as People and Planet, the QS World University Rankings and the Times Higher Education Rankings.

4.4 Key benefits of initiatives

The self-reported key benefits align closely with Section 4.2 above and the themes in Figure 4 indicate the range of positive contributions associated with the best practice examples.

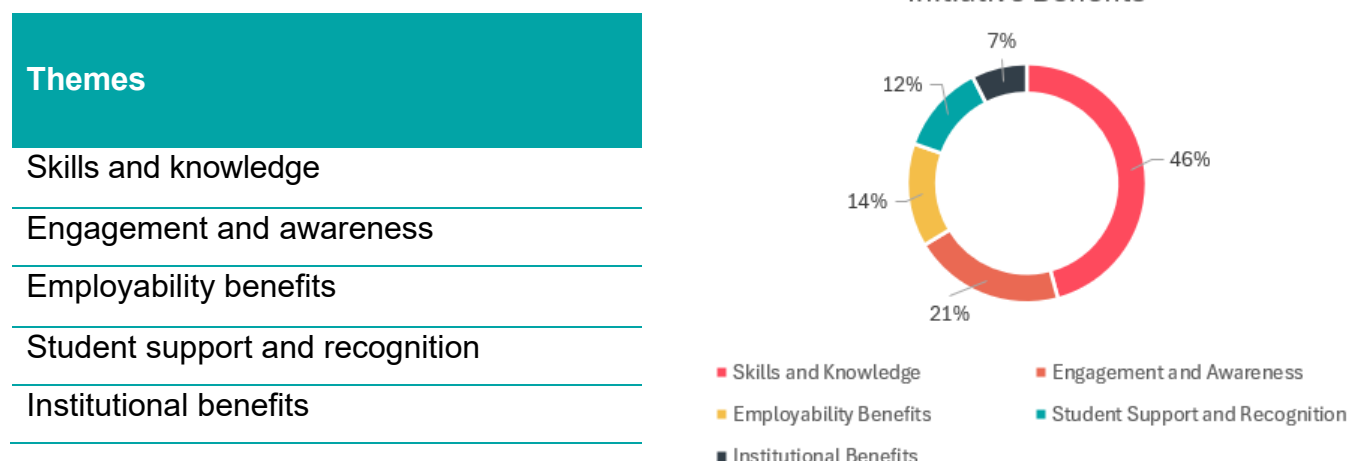


Figure 4. Initiative benefits

Skills and knowledge

The most common benefit to be reported is the development of knowledge, understanding and skills related to ethical and sustainable employability. Many of these have been identified above in Section 4.2 and are associated with a diverse range of stakeholders such as staff, students, industry partners, communities and government. Skills such as collaboration, communication, leadership and team work were commonly referred to and the use of best practice examples and employability initiatives were described as a major teaching benefit. For example, through courses such as the Swansea University 'Carbon and Climate Action Awareness' online course for staff and students or the Open University's 'Learning Design Sustainability Skills Cards'.

Engagement and awareness

Engagement and awareness of sustainability and ethics related topics was the second most common benefit to be identified within best practice examples. This included opportunities for stakeholder engagement and marketing specifically. For example, engagement with the community within the Aberystwyth University 'Creative Community Engagement' event and Swansea University's 'Marketing for Good' module, or student engagement and awareness via the Cardiff University 'Ethics, Values and Sustainability' working group and the Interdisciplinary Hackathon engaging participants with the WFGA (2015).

Employability benefits

Ethical and sustainable employability benefits included enhanced employer awareness, student employability, paid work opportunities and real-world application of knowledge to

industry settings. For example, through funding such as the Targeted Employability Support Fund at Cardiff Metropolitan University, internship opportunities as per various institutions' Ethical Careers Policies, working groups such as the Cardiff University 'Ethics, Values and Sustainability' working group, forums similar to the Wrexham University 'Sustainability Action Forum' and resources such as the Open University's Employer Sustainability Toolkit.

Support and recognition

An invaluable benefit identified for many initiatives was staff and student empowerment, support and recognition. For example, co-creation, collaboration and celebrating the student voice as with the Cardiff University 'Ethics, Values and Sustainability' working group, the Open University's 'Fulfilling Futures in Environment and Sustainability' forum and Wrexham University's 'Sustainability Action Forum'. Staff and student support for curriculum delivery and assessment was also an important benefit as per the Swansea University 'Ethics in the Engineering Curriculum workshop', Swansea University's 'Canvas Training Course on Embedding Sustainability in the Curriculum' and the Open University's 'Learning Design Sustainability Skills Cards'. However, to truly support students, initiatives should be accessible and facilitate diverse participation to promote equality and inclusion. This was an important consideration highlighted by the Open University's 'Medru Digital Skills Factory'. Finally, noted forms of recognition included certificates, e-badges, formative and summative grades, degree outcomes, extra curricular qualifications and course completion.

Institutional benefits

A key benefit of the best practice examples was the collective impact at an individual and institutional level. This was referred to through performance indicators such as graduate outcomes, but a more valuable indicator is the collective impact of educating a generation of responsible and ethical leaders of the future. Additional benefits include funding opportunities for staff, students and institutions to support ethical and sustainable employability. For example, via staff support and upskilling, student ventures, institutional networks and projects. The above benefits collectively contribute towards the enhanced reputation of the institution.

4.5 Initiative improvements and future actions

In the context of accelerating global challenges, from climate change to technological disruption, the need for responsive, future-oriented employability initiatives is more pressing than ever. The activities showcased in this report represent a strong foundation, yet as the sector navigates rapid change, they also speak of a clear opportunity to strengthen impact through deeper collaboration, wider inclusion and more intentional alignment with global sustainability goals. This section explores areas for improvement and outlines potential future actions to enhance the relevance, reach and resilience of employability provision. Figure 5 highlights key areas for initiative improvements.

Themes
Initiative development
Initiative engagement
Resources and administration
Support and encouragement

Figure 5. Initiative improvements

The most common improvements and future actions were developing ethical and sustainable employability initiatives through activity development, expansion, variation or improvements. Developments identified were often specific to each initiative. For example, the Open University used stakeholder feedback to inform developments for the Open University Sustainability Toolkit and student co-creation for its Sustainathon. This aligns with engagement, whereby increasing participation, in particular interdisciplinary participation, stakeholder engagement, co-creation and marketing were recognised as methods to support and encourage staff, students and other stakeholders to engage with ethical and sustainable employability.

Further examples included the expansion of local relationships to support the Cardiff University Sustainable Development and Managing with Nature MSc module and encouragement from management and sustainability champions to prompt staff to complete the optional Swansea University Embedding Sustainability into the Curriculum course. However, additional time and funding were noted as resources that are often required to improve initiatives and the organisation of them. For example, Bangor University PloCC events will take place only when funding allows and additional time was required to support the Swansea University WFGA (2015) Hackathon to proceed with the planned expansion to a pan Wales event.

4.6 Key insights and practical implications

While the initiatives reviewed span a wide and diverse range of approaches, this section draws together key messages to support reflection and practical development. The points below highlight common insights related to ethical and sustainable employability from tertiary education institutions across Wales. These examples are context specific and should be interpreted as guidance – adapted and scaled to suit the unique needs, priorities and structures of individual institutions.

- + **Tailored initiatives with real-world and practical relevance** and **guest speakers** from industry help students to understand the importance of sustainable and ethical employment.
- + **Digital resources**, hybrid delivery and variation in methods supports accessibility of learning.
- + **The diversity of needs, values and standards** should be acknowledged in sustainable and ethical employability initiatives.
- + **Support from management**, committees and sustainable and ethical employability champions is invaluable to embed these topics into processes and curricula. Student support and buy-in is also required.
- + **Co-creation, collaboration, sharing of best practice** and pedagogic innovation is key to progress sustainable and ethical employment.
- + Development and frequent use of **graduate attributes, inner development and green skills** such as problem solving, scenario planning and futures thinking will support sustainable practices.
- + **Time is important.** As a resource it can be an inhibitor, yet is required for staff and students to complete training and reflect on important topics. Timing and scheduling of initiatives is also important to consider.
- + **Evaluation of initiatives** is important for impact, engagement and development.
- + Students value ethical and sustainable career guidance and there is demand for support to **create ethical and sustainable businesses at inception.**

5 Conclusion

Across the UK tertiary education sector, a rich and varied landscape of activity is emerging at the intersection of sustainability and employability. This report has shown inspiring examples of how institutions are embedding ethical, values-driven approaches into student development, often through creative, student-led and community-focused initiatives. These activities do more than prepare graduates for the labour market; they support learners to navigate complex global challenges, develop a sense of agency, and contribute meaningfully as active citizens.

The limitations of a narrow, skills-only approach to employability have been evident for some time. As the scale and urgency of global challenges intensify, the need to support students in developing a broader, values-driven understanding of employability has never been more critical. Contemporary pedagogy demands more than technical preparation for the labour market – it calls for learning experiences that are inclusive, meaningful and rooted in real-world contexts. Through curriculum innovation, extra-curricular initiatives and employer engagement, educators are forging connections between employability, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and, in Wales, the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015).

Tribute must be paid to the creativity, commitment and pedagogical expertise of educators who are shaping this agenda in often challenging conditions. Their work demonstrates what is possible when values-led teaching is prioritised. At the same time, the report identifies ongoing gaps – particularly where financial constraints, workload pressures and institutional uncertainty risk limiting innovation. Addressing these challenges will be vital to ensuring that employability in UK higher education continues to evolve in ways that are sustainable, equitable and future focused.

6 Recommendations

Based on the project findings to date, we propose the following recommendations.

6.1 Resource development - toolkit

In order to make the research project findings accessible to as many HE, FE and external stakeholders within Wales and beyond, a toolkit of examples will be created. This toolkit will highlight different ways in which ethical and sustainable employability can be embedded and encouraged. Each example will include actionable information to enable stakeholders to use and build on in their own settings.

6.2 Collaboration and communication

It is evident from the findings that ethical and sustainable employability is being embedded throughout HE and among other stakeholders within Wales. As such, and given the CoP, there is the potential to use this forum to begin actionable discussions around how collaboration can take place to position Wales at the forefront of ethical and sustainable employability.

6.3 Further research/projects

In order to further build on the research findings to date, a mapping exercise of the level of integration of ethics and sustainability into HE and FE throughout Wales will be undertaken using quantitative survey methodologies as well as interview/focus group qualitative methodologies. This will enable a broad yet in-depth understanding of the state of ethical and sustainable employability within Wales and how this can be further built upon.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Ethical and sustainable employability example form

Title of Project: Ethical and Sustainable Employability in Welsh Higher/Further Education Institutions

Researchers:

- + Dr Samantha Burvill, Beth Cummings, Dr Fern Davies, Simeon Smith (Swansea University)
- + Lucy Jones (Wrexham University)
- + Laura Carter (Open University)
- + Saffron Passam (Aberystwyth University)
- + Gemma Peterson (Cardiff University)
- + Hizamshol Shamshul Kamal (Bangor University)

Study Information

The aim of this study is to gain best practice examples of how ethical and sustainable employability is approached throughout higher/further education institutions within Wales. **In this context ethical and sustainable employability is defined** as an intervention with students and external stakeholders that *“equips learners with the knowledge, competencies and values to tackle interconnected global challenges and have a positive impact on economic, social and environmental sustainability”* (Advance HE, 2024, p.2). It is also described by Advance HE and QAA as *“the process of creating curriculum structures and subject-relevant content to support and enact sustainable development”* (QAA and Advance HE, 2021, p.2).

Examples are being sought from within the curriculum, extra curricular, from careers and enterprise services and from relationships with external stakeholders. These best practice examples will be collated into a report and presentation for Medr (The Commission for Tertiary Education and Research) as well as a toolkit for use by Higher and Further Education institutions and beyond.

A consent form is provided below to gain your permission for the possible utilisation of the examples provided into a toolkit and to feedback to Medr.

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INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Please read the following statements and, if you agree, initial the corresponding box to confirm agreement:

	Initials
I confirm that I have read and understand the study information (provided above) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	☐
I understand that my participation is <u>voluntary</u> and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.	☐
I understand that my data will be treated confidentially	☐
I freely agree to participate in this study and understand that the examples I provide may be published in a report for Medr, a toolkit for Medr and other publications.	☐

Signatures:

_____ Name of participant (block capitals)	_____ Date	_____ Signature
_____ Researcher (block capitals)	_____ Date	_____ Signature

If you have any complaints or concerns about this research, you can contact Dr Fern Davies at f.b.davies@swansea.ac.uk

Medr Ethical and Sustainable Employability Task and Finish Group

Institutional Examples of Best Practice Initiatives for Ethical and Sustainable Employability

Name:	
Email:	
Institution:	
Role:	
Title of initiative:	
<u>Type of Initiative:</u> Curricular ☐ Extra-curricular ☐ E&I ☐ Other (please specify below) ☐	<u>Activity Format:</u> Seminar activity ☐ Lecture activity ☐ Event ☐ Other (please specify below) ☐
If 'other', please specify below:	
Initiative description: <i>Briefly describe the initiative.</i> <i>What were the aims or learning outcomes?</i> <i>How many participants were involved?</i> <i>Who was involved? (e.g. students, staff, industry representatives, enterprise team etc.)</i> <i>Were any materials, software or tools required?</i> <i>Were there any associated costs? If so, please specify.</i>	

**Please add supporting documents (e.g. example teaching materials) as a separate email attachment.*

Ethical and Sustainable Employability Alignment:

How does this initiative contribute to ethical and sustainable employability?

Impact and Evaluation:

What were the key benefits and outcomes of this initiative?

Was the initiative evaluated?

How was success measured?

Key insights and lessons learned:

What were the key insights and lessons learned?

What were the main takeaways or improvements for future initiatives?

Please submit this completed form along with any supportive documents (e.g. example teaching materials) via email to s.m.burvill@swansea.ac.uk by 15:00 on 12th May 2025.

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Appendix 2 – Summary of ethical and sustainable employability initiatives

Institution	Project	Contact	Type of initiative	Activity format	Time	Ethical and sustainable employability alignment
Swansea University						
SU (Academy for Teaching and Learning)	SALT 'Embedding Sustainability and the Climate Emergency into Higher Education Curricula' Canvas course	Dr Pamela Styles	Staff training course (curricular)	Staff Canvas training course	Ongoing/self-enrol and used on demand	The course refers specifically to education for sustainable development (ESD) competencies which align with key graduate attributes.
*SU (Sustainability Team)	Online Climate and Carbon E-learn Course	Teifion Maddocks	Extra-curricular	Staff and students training course	1-2 hours	Provides students with the knowledge and skills to address grand societal challenges. It also provides training for staff members which can impact curriculum design and development.
SU (School of Management)	Swansea University Circular Economy Student Society	Dr Sandra Dettmer	Extra-curricular	Student society	Ongoing	Leadership, project management, communication, team working and green skills.
SU (School of Management)	Sustainability Student Survey	Dr Fern Davies	Student survey (curricular)	Student survey	Annual distribution	The survey identifies strengths and areas for improvement to strengthen graduate attributes.
*SU (School of Management)	Marketing for Good	Lucy Griffiths	Curricular	Seminar, lecture and event activity	Module (1 term)	'Marketing for Good' integrated industry-linked assessed projects set by three external third sector clients: Wales Air Ambulance, The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, and The Wallich. Practical industry skills development in lab settings.
SU (School of Management)	Undergraduate Module (Environmental and Sustainable Management)	Dr Jennifer Rudd and Sarah Atkinson	Curricular	Seminar and lecture activity	Module (1 term)	Green and transferrable skills, subject knowledge and industry/guest speakers
SU (Engineering)	Ethics in Engineering Curriculum	Dr Sam Rolland	Curricular	Seminar activity	MSc Module (1 term)	The module introduces topics beyond the technical aspects of the students' degrees. Assessment through a group project and policy brief are not

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						prescriptive about the technical scope, enabling students to apply ethical and sustainable engineering knowledge, understanding and reflection to their own field.
SU (School of Management)	Enterprise and Creativity: Entrepreneurship in Practice	Professor Louisa Huxtable-Thomas	Curricular	Seminar and lecture activity	Module	Critical thinking, understanding purposeful entrepreneurship, effectuation, bricolage and gathering resources, talking to stakeholders and collecting market data embedded in the course. As a result of this initiative, students have an enhanced understanding of the role of entrepreneurship in adding value to society, not just to generate wealth.
SU (School of Management)	Capstone Business Projects (Sustainability and Ethics)	Dr Fern Davies	Curricular	Business project including seminars and lectures.	Capstone Business Project (1 year)	The final year business project provides students an opportunity to address a real-world challenge from industry. All projects aligned with at least one of the SDGs and specific projects were provided in relation to sustainability, CSR and ethics.
SU (Media)	Embedding Green Approaches within Practice Modules	Non Vaughn Williams	Curricular	Lecture/ assessment activity	Module (1 term)	The initiative ensures graduates fully understand the importance placed by industry on green production principles, right from the beginning of the commissioning process to the delivery. Due to the opportunity to produce content, students can put these principles into practice and gain confidence in their understanding of ethical and sustainable ways of working within a fast-paced and competitive sector.
SU (Law)	Embedding Sustainability into Law Seminars	Karen Morrow	Curricular	Lecture and seminar activity	1-2 hours	In Wales, sustainable development is a legal concept, the pursuit of which places public bodies, under specific legal obligations and informs their policies and enforcement of the law. A working knowledge of this is necessary to understanding and using regulatory law in Wales, not only in environmental regulatory contexts but in the public sector generally and thus has value in legal practice and appeals to employers. Organisational rankings

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						(eg, BCorp), resources for sustainable work and how to interact with employers.
SU (Employability)	Finding Sustainable Work – Student Workshop	Simeon Smith	Extra-curricular	Student workshop	1-2 hours	Employability workshop that covers professional values, different types of sustainability in employers,
SU (Employability)	Swansea University Ethical Careers Policy	Simeon Smith	Policy	Policy	NA	Provides students, staff, and external organisations clarity over what to expect from their interactions with Careers and Employability at Swansea University.
SU (School of Management)	Postgraduate Module Assessment (Innovation and Entrepreneurship Module)	David Pickernell	Curricular	Assessment	Module (1 term)	Innovation and entrepreneurship focus is expanded by look at a real-world issue where ideas will be applicable in students' future research.
SU (School of Management)	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences WFGA Hackathon	Samantha Burvill	Extra-curricular	Event for students	6 hours	The hackathon raised awareness of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and encouraged students to think about the long-term impact of their decisions.
SU	International Hackathon "Invent for the planet"	Kelly Jordan	Extra-curricular	Event for students	48 hours	The hackathon developed many skills for graduates, including the ability to put their problem-solving skills into a real-world challenge.
Open University						
OU	Micro credential – 'Transforming your Organisation for Sustainability'	Victoria Hands	Curricular	Micro credential – online learning	100 hours	Delivers transferable and practical skills that can be applied to an organisation through an action plan inspired by insights and case studies.
OU (Partnerships)	You, Me and the Future of Wales E-learning Resource	Rebecca Falvey	Extra-curricular	OpenLearn Resource for all	Ongoing	The resource provides a greater understanding of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the Well-being Goals and the Ways of Working, benefitting graduates' employability.
*OU (Careers and Employability)	Employer Sustainability Toolkit	Jen Harrison	Extra-curricular	Two online resources for Employers	Ongoing	The toolkit prepares employers for the future direction of work, providing them with knowledge of the responsibilities and practices needed in job roles.
OU (Careers and Employability)	Fulfilling futures in environment and sustainability	Kate Machent	Extra-curricular	Online Student Forum	6 day online forum – 12 month read only	Allowed students to communicate collaboratively, including discussions around the sustainability topic and its role within the working environment.

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OU	Inner Development Goals Go-Green Event	Teresa Cox	Extra-curricular	Event for staff	Ongoing (recorded)	The inner development subject covered describes the skills that can be acquired from the process. Capacities developed from this result in a better adaption to change.
OU (Partnerships)	Medru – Digital Skills Factory	Samantha Forde	E&I	Digital Skills Factory for multiple stakeholders	Ongoing	Provides skills surrounding data, cybersecurity and IT, preparing stakeholders for adaptability of the future landscape. Awareness of carbon footprint is outlined.
OU (Student Opportunities)	Open Business Creators Fund	Robert Wilson	Extra-curricular	Competition for students	Each year	A tool given to students requires that they consider the relevant SDGs for their chosen enterprise regardless of the sector it operates in.
OU (Learning, Skills and Innovation)	Student-led Sustainable Development Goals Curriculum Audit	Scott Mckenzie	Curricular	Student-led research project	60 days (approx. 2 months)	The mapping of SDGs by students gave them an opportunity to apply their learning to real-life experience, developing their education for sustainable development (ESD) skills.
*OU (Careers and Employability)	Sustainathon	Jen Harrison	Extra-curricular	Event for students	One week	The charitable projects given to students provides them with real-world experience within a low environmental impact, digital working environment. Skills such as creative problem-solving and communication are gained.
OU (Broadcast and Partnerships)	The Regenerators: Green Careers	Victoria Hands	Extra-curricular	BBC Bitesize Online Resource for children, teenagers and young people	Ongoing	The series of digital videos based around important environmental issues and sustainability elements, equip the children with an understanding of this, for their future careers.
OU (Learning Design Sustainability Group)	Learning Design Sustainability Skills Cards	Kathleen Calder, Paul Astles	Curricular	Open educational resources for educators	Ongoing	The sustainability skills cards help educators to provide students with the knowledge of where sustainability skills already exist within employability and digital literacy skills. The Responsible by Design (RBD) framework allows the ethical responsibilities and implications of GenAI to be addressed.
Aberystwyth University						

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*AU (Careers and Employability)	Aberystwyth University Ethical Careers Policy	Bev Herring	Ethical Careers Policy	Ethical Careers Policy	Ongoing	The policy ensures that the careers and employability service within the university aligns with ethical and sustainable values by prioritising the related activities.
AU (Careers and Employability)	Sustainability Challenge (Part of sustainably focused event, CareerFest)	Bev Herring	Extra-curricular	Event (interactive workshop) for students	3.5 hours	The challenge allows students to gain problem-solving, teamwork and leadership skills, through sustainable practices. Additionally, gaining confidence for their careers.
AU (Biotechnology)	Embedding UN SDGs and The Well-being of Future Generations Act as drivers for research in biotechnology.	Hazel Davey	Curricular	Lectures, workshops and coursework for students	Module repeated each year	By addressing examples of SDG applications in biotechnology, students are made aware of how companies and investors are driven by sustainability.
AU (Behaviour Change)	MSc Behaviour Change	Simon Payne	Curricular	Entire scheme of the course	Each year	Students are encouraged to make a positive economic, societal and environmental difference throughout their work, then having the ability to apply this content upon graduating.
AU (International Politics)	Student facilitation of creative community engagement	Katy Budge	Extra-curricular, E&I	Delivery of Day Festival	One day (more for training prior)	Supporting refugee communities will allow students to gain skills, experience and confidence relevant to this and make considerations in future work.
Cardiff Metropolitan University						
CMU (TESS)	Targeted Employability Support Fund delivery at Cardiff Met	Laura Stutins	Cross-cutting	Variety, primarily one-to-one support for students	Activities vary – e.g. 20 minute or 45 minute appointments	It is ethical in that the university is reaching out to students who require additional support, empowering their skills, making it more likely for them to contribute sustainably to the economy in the future.
UWTSD						
*UWTSD (Early Years Education)	Regaining Paradise: Sustainability in the early years	Glenda Tinney	Curricular	Module including John Muir Award student participation	Each year	Exploring sustainability aspects with relation to the early years teaching setting, will support students in engaging with these practices in future employment.
Cardiff University						

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CU (Education Development)	Staff development and support Sustainability EDS Toolkit and CPD workshop	Laura Barritt	Extra-curricular	Open online toolkit resource and workshop for staff	Toolkit – ongoing	The toolkit allows staff to incorporate further sustainability practices into their teaching, strengthened by the workshop which enabled them to converse about which practices will link to graduate attributes.
CU (Physiotherapy)	MSc Pre-registration Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy	Jill Morgan	Curricular	Lectures, workshops, group project for students	Each year	Real-life problems are experienced in these programs, allowing students to develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills in relation to the healthcare sector, influenced by sustainable practices.
*CU (Employer Engagement)	Ethics, Values and Sustainability Working Group and Activity	Jade Smithson-Perring	Extra-curricular	Working group, online resources and events for staff and students	Ongoing	The initiative raises awareness, promotes critical thinking, encourages informed decision-making, expands access to green careers, and aligns with graduate attributes.
CU (Environmental History)	Environmental History Module	Keir Waddington	Curricular	Seminar and lecture activity for students	Each year	The course involves communication, collaboration and reflection, in a number of forms, of how different environmental issues are looked at in a historical context and how this can be used to draw new insights.
CU (Earth and Environmental Sciences)	Sustainable Geoscience Module	Joel Gill	Curricular	Module activities and assessment for students	Each year	Written communication skills are placed into the context of sustainable challenges. Data analysis of scientific information takes place, and students present their findings in multiple ways.
CU (Business School)	Sustainable Development and Managing with Nature Module, as part of MSc International Management	Genevieve Shanahan	Curricular	Seminar activity for students	Each year	Many skill areas are developed in this module, including development of knowledge of sustainability challenges, values-based decision-making framework and ethical data analysis.
Bangor University						
*BU	Places of Climate Change (PloCC)	Thora Tenbrink	Curricular and Extra-curricular	Cross-cutting (Masters Programme, monthly seminars,	Ongoing	The initiative prioritises ethics and sustainability actions, ensuring that various work environments, within and beyond academia are engaged with.

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				workshop, internship)		
BU	Sustainability Finance and ESG	Hizamshol Kamal	Curricular	Seminar activity for students	Ongoing	Encourages students to make decisions ethically and sustainably because all actions can have broader and long-term impacts, also connecting their personal and professional challenges.
WJEC						
WJEC	Further education institutions' use of WJEC Sustainability Qualification	NPTC Group of Colleges, Coleg Sir Gar, other FE unnamed and Jobs Growth Wales	Curricular	Implementation of the qualification into institutions' programmes	Ongoing	The Sustainability Qualification links to the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the UN SDGs, educating the students that the information is being taught.
*WJEC	Further education qualification developed in collaboration with the Well-being of Future Generations Act.	Rachel Dodge	Curricular	Qualification being offered via FE institutions.	Ongoing	The qualifications teach students about the Well-being of Future Generations Act and UN SDGs, and how they can be practically applied in their workplace.
Wrexham University						
*WU	Ecological Citizen(s) Network+	-	-	Research Network	4 years	The multi-disciplinary team brings together knowledge for a better future for all through sustainable practices.
WU	Sustainable Skills for Brighter Futures	Lucy Jones	Curricular	Degree programme enhancements	Ongoing	Provides support for an educated community who go on to improve global or environmental awareness within their graduate careers.
WU	Living Lab Project	Lesslie Malinga	Extra - curricular	Project	One-day	Volunteering opportunity for students to engage with nature, supporting the University's sustainability goals.
WU	Ethical Careers Policy	Lynda Powell, Lucy Jones	Policy	Policy	Ongoing	The policy represents the responsibility to take social and climate justice seriously and be selective about organisations they work with.

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WU	Sustainability Action Forum (SAF)	Wu	Extra-curricular	Website	Ongoing	Provides resources for students on projects and other sustainable and ethical initiatives which can broaden understanding.
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Appendix 3 – thematic coding tables

1. Sustainable and ethical employability initiative description		
Initial coding	Themes	Occurrences
Module	Teaching and learning	4
Seminar activity		10
Lecture activity		11
Workshop		6
Educational resource		1
Student e-learning course		1
Micro credential course		1
Curriculum changes		1
Business project	Student projects	1
Group project		1
Research project		2
Student project		1
Assessment	Assessment	4
Staff toolkit	Staff training and support	1
Curriculum support group		1
Working group		1
Staff e-learning course		1
Online resource		1
Online training		1
Canvas course		1
Student survey	Student feedback	1
Student support	Student support	1
Student society		1
Event	Events	11
Employer toolkit	Employability resources	1
Careers resource		1
Online employability resource		1
Competition	Competitions	1
Sustainability award	Awards, qualifications and funding	1
Qualification		2
Funding		1
Policy	Policies	3
Online forum	Networks and forums	1
Network		1
Website		1

2. Alignment with ethical and sustainable employability		
Initial Coding	Themes	Occurrences
Collaborative skills	Skills development	5
Communication skills		5
Critical analysis skills		1
Critical thinking skills		2
Data analytics skills		1
Decision making skills		2
Development of graduate skills		4
Digital skills		1
Graduate skills		1
Green skills development		1
Group work skills		3
Innovation and creative skills		4
Practical skills		2
Problem identification skills		1
Problem solving skills		3
Reflective skills		2
Student Green Skills		1
Systems thinking skills		1
Sustainability skills for children		1
Application of knowledge	Knowledge and understanding	1
Knowledge of Green digital practices		2
Climate change understanding		1
Student understanding		1
Sustainability knowledge		2
Curriculum development		3
Sustainability content		1
Sustainability education of children		1
UNESCO competencies	Introduction to frameworks	1
Wellbeing of Future Generations Act		7
SDG		8
Link to ESD		3
Five pillars		1
Sustainability and ethics in practice	Sustainability and ethics in practice	1
Sustainability in practice		10
Sustainable development in practice		1
Sustainability and ethics projects		2
Sustainability for the future		1
Sustainability in industry		1
Sustainability case study		2
Ethical and sustainable decisions		1
Ethical data analysis		1
GenAI and ethics		1
Ethics		1
Employability		6
Ethical careers		1

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Ethical employment	Individual and Societal Impact	1
Green careers		15
Student impact to sustainability		1
Societal impact		1
Societal impact		1

3. Evaluation of initiatives		
Initial Coding	Themes	Occurrences
Module feedback	Feedback	3
Feedback		6
Student feedback		18
Staff feedback		4
Participant feedback		2
Employer feedback		2
Social media feedback		3
Stakeholder feedback		4
Initiative reviews		1
Curriculum review		1
Resource views	Initiative engagement	1
Engagement		5
Accessed numbers		3
Attendance		9
Student numbers		1
Employer numbers		1
Member numbers		1
Participant numbers		6
Number of events		1
Resource uptake		1
Resource reuse		1
Student diversity		1
Module recruitment		1
Student grades	Initiative outcomes	3
Student understanding		3
Quality of work		1
Assessment outcomes		6
Completion rate		1
Project completion		1
Outputs		1
Award completion		3
Learning outcomes		1
Graduate outcomes		4
Related study uptake	Institutional performance	1
League tables		1
Ratings		2
Student attainment		1

4. Key benefits/outcomes		
Initial coding	Themes	Occurrences
Collaboration	Skills and Knowledge	3
Communication		2
Staff understanding		3
Skills and knowledge		32
Best practice examples		1
Teaching benefits		8
Marketing	Engagement and Awareness	1
Engagement		4
Stakeholder engagement		11
Awareness		6
Employability	Employability Benefits	5
Employer awareness		1
Paid work		1
Real-world application		8
Student empowerment	Student Support and Recognition	1
Student support		5
Recognition		7
Impact	Institutional Benefits	2
Funding		4
Reputation		2

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5. Key improvements/future actions		
Initial coding	Themes	Occurrences
Activity development	Initiative development	8
Expansion of initiative		1
Teaching improvements		6
Sustainable initiative practices		5
Student project assignment		1
Assessment method variation		2
Time	Resources and administration	1
Funding		1
Organisation		2
Student support	Support and encouragement	2
Staff encouragement		1
Student encouragement		2
Stakeholder engagement	Engagement	2
Increase participation		3
Compulsory resources		2
Interdisciplinary participation		1
Student co-creation		1
Marketing		1

8 Glossary

ESE – Ethical and Sustainable Employability

HE – Higher education

FE – Further education

SALT – Swansea University Academy of Learning and Teaching

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

TE – Tertiary education

UWTSD – University of Wales Trinity Saint David

WFGA – Well-Being of Future Generations Act (Wales, 2015)

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