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QAA

# How do we know it's working? Monitoring and Evaluating ESD in Higher Education

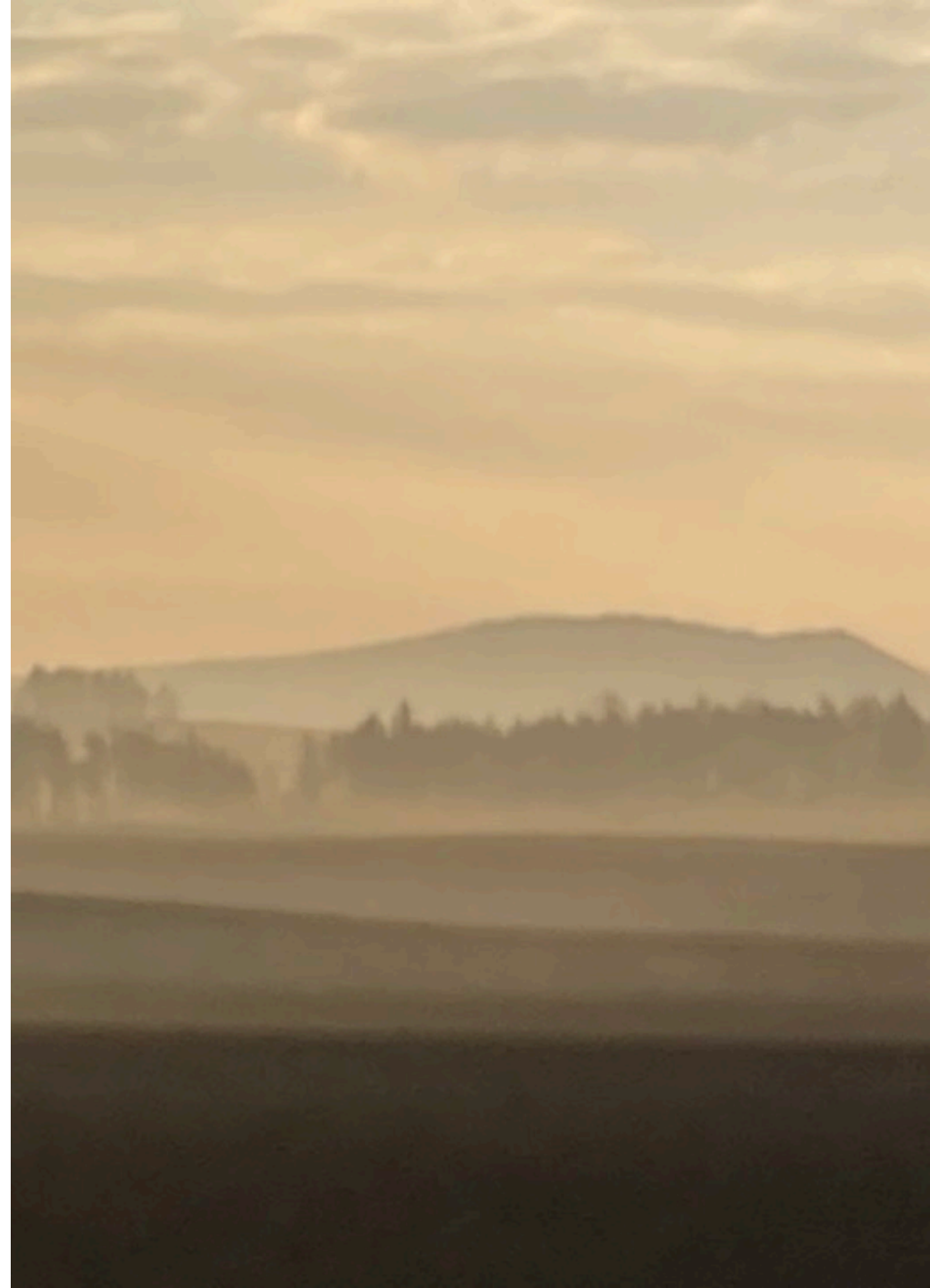
RCE Scotland  
November 2023

# Background

*“ESD is an educational change agenda grounded in transformative learning and critical pedagogy. It can be understood as a lens that permits us to look critically at how the world is and to envision how it might be and equips us to deliver that vision”*

QAA / Advance HE Guidance 2021

QAA/Advance HE (2021); Giangrande et al (2019);  
White (2004)



# How do we know it's working?

## Monitoring and Evaluating ESD in Higher Education

### Project Lead:

Dr Rehema White, University of St Andrews and Chair RCE Scotland

### Project Partners:



University of St Andrews



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# Project aims

The aims of this collaborative project were :

- To **assess current approaches** to and tools for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of ESD in UK universities
- To **develop some generic tools** for M&E of ESD
- To **pilot approaches and tools**
- To **share lessons** learned

# Project Activities

- Analysis of **existing ESD M&E approaches**
- **Review of literature** and M&E examples
- **Workshop** (online) to co-design principles of framework and tools
- **Pilot tools** (SDG mapping and competency survey)
- **Interviews** with key ESD people and those piloting tools
- **Workshop** (online) to share lessons learned
- **Handbook** with framework and tools [available online](#)



# Principles of M&E – the tensions!

- Embed with existing systems/agendas AND be a radical transformation
- Support ESD self declared champions AND widening participation
- Incentives eg prizes, awards AND regulations eg requirement to register
- Flexible and participatory AND targets and indicators
- Top down support of senior managers AND supporting grassroots sustainability enthusiasts and student voice
- ESD as learning process AND outcomes



# Framework to monitor and evaluate Education for Sustainable Development



1 Discuss	Define ESD for context
2 Map	Scope baseline ESD
3 Plan	Set goals and action plan
4 Support	Enhance and deepen ESD
5 Evaluate	Assess ESD outputs and impacts
6 Reflect	Adapt next cycle of plans

# How to use the Framework and Handbook

- A spiral of 6 steps, can be iterative or modular
- Requires stakeholder engagement and co-design
- Adapt to context





# 1 Discuss: What is ESD for us?

- Contexts differ
- Perspectives differ
- A dialogical process amongst stakeholders increases understanding and enhances buy in
- Topics, Pedagogies and Competencies
- Just get started!

*“ESD is an educational change agenda grounded in transformative learning and critical pedagogy. It can be understood as a lens that permits us to look critically at how the world is and to envision how it might be and equips us to deliver that vision” QAA / Advance HE Guidance 2021*



## 2 Map: how much ESD are we already achieving?

- Map curriculum
- Map extra-curricular activity
- Map student and staff engagement

e.g. Coverage of SDGs; number of students exposed to ESD; proportion of programmes with ESD in core modules



### 3. Plan: How do we create goals and an action plan for ESD?

- **Overarching goals**
  - e.g. enhancing innovative pedagogies, supporting student voice in curriculum development
- **Quantitative and qualitative targets**
  - e.g. increase diversity of assessments, all students experience ESD
- **Indicators**
  - e.g. proportion of students experiencing ESD by end of year
- **Action plan**
  - e.g. staff training, mapping routine, student engagement



# 4. Support: How do we deepen provision of ESD?

## Supporting

- Staff training
- Student champions

## Deepening

- Workshops and academic forum
- Research on ESD
- Whole institution approach

## Celebrating

- Award and certification
- Student choices



# 5. Evaluate: How do we assess impacts of ESD?

- Activities, outputs, outcomes, impacts
- Assessing **quality** of activities
- **Quantitative** measures such as number of students experiencing ESD
- **Outcomes** such as acquisition of competencies
- **Impacts** such as employment choices, change agents, short and long term

	PROJECT SUMMARY	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	RISKS / ASSUMPTIONS
Goal				
Outcomes				
Outputs				
Activities				

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/aug/17/how-to-write-a-logframe-a-beginners-guide>



# 6. Reflect: What can we learn to adapt future plans?

- Take time to reflect, learn, adapt
- Short term (annual) and long term (4 year) **reviews**
- **Include all stakeholders**, including students, alumni, community, employers as well as academic, support and operations staff
- **Link to celebration**



## Tools and resources available online on the QAA website

Handbook

Competencies survey

Logframe template



# Conclusions

- M&E in an active learning cycle is not boring, add on or nice-to-have!
- This integrated spiral process can be adapted for any context



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