

STARS 2.1 Technical Manual: Administrative Update Two

Summary of Changes

In accordance with the [Technical Development Policy](#), on December 22, 2016 the STARS Steering Committee approved the following administrative changes to the [STARS 2.1 Technical Manual](#).

Introductory Materials

- To recognize the publication and global prominence of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), add information about the SDGs to the “Understanding Sustainability” section of the Technical Manual:

In 2015, the United Nations published *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, a "plan of action for people, planet and prosperity". The publication outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets, and seeks to build on previous efforts by outlining a 15-year agenda that balances "the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental".

Institutional Characteristics

- To ensure that special focus institutions are correctly categorized, update the definition of institution type:

Each institution is classified into one of four basic types adapted from Carnegie U.S.

Classifications:

- Associate's Colleges include institutions where all degrees are at the associate's level, or where baccalaureate degrees account for less than 10 percent of all undergraduate degrees.
- Baccalaureate Colleges include institutions where baccalaureate degrees represent at least 10 percent of all undergraduate degrees and where fewer than 50 master's degrees or 20 doctoral degrees are awarded annually. (May include some institutions above the master's degree threshold.)
- Master's Colleges and Universities generally include institutions that award at least 50 master's degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees annually.
- Doctorate-granting Universities include institutions that award at least 20 research doctoral degrees annually (~~which may include~~ excluding doctoral-level degrees that qualify recipients for entry into professional practice, such as the JD, MD, PharmD, DPT, etc).

Each institution should report the institution type that is most appropriate given its context and with consideration for the criteria outlined above. For example, a U.S. Carnegie-classified Special Focus institution or Tribal College should select the institution type that best reflects the number and type of degrees offered.

- To address participant inquiries, clarify that institutions with hospitals should report “staffed beds” as opposed to “licensed beds”. “Licensed beds” include the maximum number of beds a hospital is licensed to staff, whereas “staffed beds” only include beds that are in service and occupied for at least 50 percent of the time. Of the two, “staffed beds” is therefore the more appropriate way to approximate full-time occupancy. See the [Practice Greenhealth Benchmarking Report](#), p. 10)

□ Number of other individuals resident on-site, e.g. family members of employees, individuals lodging on-site (by average occupancy rate), and/or in-patient **staffed** hospital beds (if applicable)

Staffed hospital beds

Consistent with Practice Greenhealth, **staffed hospital beds:**

are those in-service and patient-ready for more than half of the days in the reporting period. Staffed beds does not include beds ordinarily occupied for less than 24 hours, such as those in the emergency department, clinic, labor (birthing) rooms, surgery and recovery rooms and outpatient holding beds.

Academics

Curriculum

Academic Courses

- Add language to remind participants of the primary intent behind conducting a course inventory:

Institution has conducted an inventory during the previous three years to identify its sustainability course offerings **for current and prospective students**.

- To supplement the existing definition of sustainability course offerings, add a definition of “sustainability challenges” to Standards & Terms, referencing the Earth Charter and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

Sustainability challenges

Consistent with [Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (United Nations, 2015), major sustainability challenges include (but are not limited to) climate change, global poverty and inequality, natural resource depletion, and environmental degradation. To

identify courses, research, programs, and initiatives that contribute towards understanding or solving sustainability challenges, it is helpful to ask:

- Does it contribute towards realizing one or more of the principles outlined in the [Earth Charter](#)?
And/or
- Does it contribute towards achieving one or more of the targets embedded in the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)?

Learning Outcomes

- To address participant inquiries, clarify that mission, vision and values statements do not count as learning outcomes unless they fully meet the criteria and definitions provided.
- Add examples of sustainability learning outcomes to Standards & Terms to provide better guidance to participants who might not be familiar with learning outcomes. The examples are adapted from a paper published in the [International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education](#).

Examples of sustainability learning outcomes include:

- Students will be able to define sustainability and identify major sustainability challenges.
- Students will have an understanding of their ethical responsibility towards present and future generations.
- Students will have an understanding of the carrying capacity of ecosystems.
- Students will be able to apply concepts of sustainable development to address sustainability challenges in a global context.
- Students will identify, act on, and evaluate their professional and personal actions with the knowledge and appreciation of interconnections among economic, environmental, and social perspectives in order to create a more sustainable future.

Sustainability Literacy Assessment

- In response to participant feedback, clarify under what circumstances a single assessment that addresses both sustainability literacy and culture can count.

An institution may use a single instrument that addresses sustainability literacy, culture, and/or engagement to meet the criteria for this credit if at least **ten questions** or a third of the assessment focuses on student knowledge of sustainability topics and challenges.

Campus as a Living Laboratory

- To help address participant inquiries, add the example of students gathering and analyzing data for a sustainability report or STARS submission to the Credit Example (under Coordination & Planning).

Research

Research and Scholarship

- For consistency, add introductory language about conducting a research inventory and otherwise align credit criteria with the Academic Courses credit.
- To supplement the existing definition of sustainability research, add a definition of “sustainability challenges” to Standards & Terms, referencing the Earth Charter and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Support for Research

- Edit the definition of sustainability research to match that provided in the Research and Scholarship credit (above).

Open Access to Research

- In response to participant inquiries, clarify that an institution must provide financial incentives to support open access publishing for a purely opt-in policy to earn points.
- Add a new optional reporting field to test a potential alternative approach to measurement for the credit:

- Estimated percentage of scholarly articles published annually by the institution's faculty and staff that are deposited in a designated open access repository (0-100)

Engagement

Campus Engagement

Student Educators Program

- Clarify "avoid double-counting" language in Reporting Fields to address participant concerns that they may be required to hand count and cross reference students to completely eliminate double-counting.

- The total number of students enrolled for credit that are served (i.e., directly targeted) by a student peer-to-peer sustainability outreach and education program (avoid double-counting to the extent feasible)

Student Life

- Add an optional reporting field to test a potential alternative approach to measurement for student engagement:

- Estimated percentage of students (full-time and part-time) that participate annually in sustainability-focused co-curricular education and outreach programs (0-100)

Assessing Sustainability Culture

- In response to participant feedback, clarify under what circumstances a single assessment that addresses both sustainability literacy and culture can count:

An institution may use a single instrument that addresses sustainability literacy, culture, and/or engagement to meet the criteria for this credit if at least **ten questions** or a third of the assessment focuses on sustainability values, behaviors and beliefs.

Staff Professional Development

- Clarify credit criteria by adding a definition of “professional development and training” and outlining the differences between peer-to-peer outreach programs and professional development:

This credit focuses on formal professional development and training opportunities, for example as delivered by trainers, managers, sustainability staff, and external organizations. Peer-to-peer educator programs and employee outreach campaigns are recognized in the *Employee Educators Program* and *Outreach Campaign* credits, respectively, and should only be reported in this credit if such programs are formally recognized by the institution as professional development and training, for example in employee performance reviews.

Professional development and training

Consistent with the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#) (OECD), professional development and training is defined as “any activity which develops an individual’s skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics” as an employee. These include formal coursework, participation in activities of professional organizations, collaborative development of new approaches, and independent study and research.

Public Engagement

Continuing Education

- Add guidance about conducting a course inventory to the Criteria to align better with the Academic Courses credit and provide clarity for participants.

- To help guide course inventories, add a definition of “sustainability challenges” to Standards & Terms, referencing the Earth Charter and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

Operations

Air & Climate

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- To better capture best practices, reinstate the optional field included in version 2.0: "A brief description of the institution’s GHG emissions reduction initiatives, including efforts made during the previous three years"

Buildings

Building Operations and Maintenance

- To help address ongoing misinterpretations, add language to further emphasize the type of green building rating system that can count:

- Certified under a green building rating system **focused on the operations and maintenance of** for existing buildings, e.g. LEED®: Building Operations + Maintenance (O+M)

Building Design and Construction

- To address participant inquiries, add the [Passive House standard](#) as an example of a non-GBC rating system:

- Floor area of newly constructed or renovated building space certified under a non-GBC rating system for design and construction (e.g. Green Globes NC, **Certified Passive House**)

- To help clarify the criteria, formally recognize and define green building codes:

Designed and built in accordance with published green building **codes**, guidelines and/or policies...

Green building codes

Consistent with the [U.S. Department of Energy](#), green building codes:

...go beyond minimum code requirements, raising the bar for energy efficiency. They can serve as a proving ground for future standards, and incorporate elements beyond the scope of the model energy codes, such as water and resource efficiency. As regional and national green building codes and programs become more available, they provide jurisdictions with another tool for guiding construction and development in an overall less impactful, more sustainable manner.

Examples include the International Green Construction Code (IgCC), ASHRAE Standard 189.1 for the Design of High-Performance Green Buildings, and regional codes such as the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen Code).

Energy

Building Energy Consumption

- Fix typos in the Scoring Example (items are in a numeric list whereas the formula refers to alphabetical list).

Food & Dining

Food and Beverage Purchasing

- Streamline the inventory requirements to eliminate redundancy.
- To address participant inquiries, add the optional “other sustainability attributes” category and examples into the main table in the Criteria to mirror the recently published [visual guide](#), clearly indicating that the category does not count towards scoring at this time.
- Add a definition of “conventional animal products” to clarify what should be reported and how to calculate the figure.
- Add a list of product categories to Measurement, as well as language clarifying that “institutions may not exclude any food and beverage products, product types or product categories from the total food and beverage expenditures figure”.
- Update the list of recognized sustainability standards to align with [Real Food Standards 2.0](#) (released Oct. 18, 2016) by adding American Humane Certified eggs, Certified Sustainably Grown, Transitional Organic, Hand in Hand (aka Rapunzel Fairtrade), LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming), and Migrant Justice’s Milk with Dignity Program.
- Expand on the Credit Example to help address common questions.

Sustainable Dining

- To address participant inquiries, add language clarifying what a sustainable dining policy is:

- Has a published sustainable dining policy that includes specific criteria to support the procurement of environmentally and socially preferable food and beverages and/or

includes guidelines to reduce or minimize the adverse environmental and social impacts of dining operations;

Purchasing

Sustainable Procurement

- For clarity and consistency, align more closely to standard international definitions of local and disadvantaged businesses:

- A stated intent to support disadvantaged businesses, social enterprises, and/or local ~~community-based businesses~~ **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)** or otherwise support positive social and economic impacts and minimize negative impacts.

A disadvantaged business is a ~~community-based business~~ **small or medium-sized enterprise (SME)** that is:

- At least 51 percent owned, managed and controlled by members of socially and/or economically disadvantaged groups. Examples include minority-owned and women-owned businesses.
And/or
- Located in an economically distressed area and for which local residents comprise 30 percent or more of all employees.

Small and medium-sized enterprises

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are defined differently in various countries and regions. Examples include:

- U.S. and Canada: all enterprises with fewer than 500 employees.
- European Union: all enterprises with fewer than 250 employees and either an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro.

In the absence of a local definition, institutions should use the World Bank definition as any enterprise that meets at least two of the following three criteria:

- Fewer than 300 employees.
- Less than \$15 million in annual sales.
- Less than \$15 million in assets.

Planning & Administration

Coordination & Planning

Participatory Governance

- Clarify the intent of Part 1 by changing all references to “governing body” to “highest governing body”. Participants often fail to reference the definition of “governing body” and therefore misinterpret the criteria. Making this change will reduce the potential for error and help AASHE staff reviewers communicate what is being asked.

Elected student, staff and/or faculty representatives on the institution's **highest** governing body.

- Fix typo: "external stakeholders".
- Clarify the scoring table for Part 1:

For each stakeholder group (students, staff and faculty):	Points available for each group	Points earned towards in Part 1
There is a representative body through which the stakeholder group can participate in governance.	0.25	
There is an elected representative of the stakeholder group on the institution's governing body.	0.25	
Total points earned per group →		Up to 0.5 for each group (up to a total of 1.5 for Part 1)

Sustainability Planning

- Based on feedback from Canadian participants, add the [Pan-Canadian Protocol for Sustainability](#) to the list of institutional commitments in the optional reporting fields.

Diversity & Affordability

Support for Underrepresented Groups

- Add definition and examples of "pipeline programs" to Standards & Terms:

Pipeline programs

Pipeline programs are programs that specifically aim to support and prepare students from underrepresented groups for academic careers. Examples include:

- [Consortium for Faculty Diversity at Liberal Arts Colleges](#)
- [The PhD project](#)
- [The CUNY Pipeline Program](#)
- [Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship program](#)
- [Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program](#)

Affordability and Access

- To address participant feedback and questions, remove ambiguity from the U.S. definition of “low income students”:

Low-Income Students

Institutions may use any standard and accepted means to identify low-income students that is appropriate for their particular national or regional context. In the U.S., for example, an institution may define low-income students as students whose family taxable income does not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level ([U.S. federal TRIO Program](#) criteria) or use the number of [Pell Grant](#) recipients and/or Pell Grant eligibility criteria as a proxy to identify low-income students. In Canada, students who are from a low-income family may be defined per the [Canada Student Loans Program criteria](#).

In the U.S., low income students are defined as those students who are receiving [Pell Grant funds](#) (as reported in the IPEDS Student Financial Aid component) and/or meet Pell Grant eligibility criteria, i.e. students whose estimated family contribution (EFC) does not exceed the maximum allowed for Pell Grant eligibility.

In Canada, low income students are defined as those students who are receiving the [Canada Student Grant for Students from Low-Income Families](#) and/or meet the Canada Student Grant for Students from Low-Income Families eligibility criteria.

Institutions outside the U.S. and Canada may use equivalent student grant eligibility criteria and/or family income thresholds to identify low-income students.

Investment & Finance

- Change the title of the subcategory from Investment to Investment & Finance to align with AASHE’s Campus Sustainability Hub and future credits that may address financial sustainability.

Wellbeing & Work

Workplace Health and Safety

- Change all uses of “reportable” to “recordable” to align with OSHA terminology.

Innovation & Leadership

Innovation

- To help participants identify innovations and ensure that claimed innovations have positive sustainability impacts, clarify that innovations must address sustainability challenges and add a definition of “sustainability challenges” to Standards & Terms, referencing the Earth Charter and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Editorial

- Add end commas as appropriate to uses of e.g. and i.e..
- Make minor formatting changes as needed for consistency.