

# AC 2: Learning Outcomes

8 points available

## A. Credit Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions with sustainability learning outcomes associated with program degrees and/or courses of study. Learning outcomes help students develop specific sustainability knowledge and skills and provide institutions and accrediting bodies with standards against which to assess student learning.

## B. Criteria

Institution's students graduate from degree programs that include sustainability as a learning outcome or include multiple sustainability learning outcomes. Sustainability learning outcomes (or the equivalent) may be specified at:

- Institution level (e.g., covering all students)
- Division level (e.g., covering one or more schools or colleges within the institution)
- Program level (e.g., covering all graduates from a degree program)
- Course level (if successful completion of the course is required to complete a degree program)

This credit includes graduate as well as undergraduate programs. For this credit, "degree programs" include majors, minors, concentrations, certificates, and other academic designations. Extension certificates and other certificates that are not part of academic degree programs do not count for this credit; they are covered in the *Continuing Education* credit in Public Engagement. Programs that include co-curricular aspects may count as long as there is an academic component of the program.

This credit is inclusive of learning outcomes, institutional learning goals, general education outcomes, and graduate profiles that are consistent with the definition of "[sustainability learning outcomes](#)" included in G. Standards and Terms. While they do not necessarily have to use the term "sustainability", learning outcomes must collectively address sustainability as an integrated concept having social, economic, and environmental dimensions for a program's graduates to count. Mission, vision and values statements are not sufficient unless the above criteria are met.

Institutions may count graduates from sustainability-focused programs (i.e., majors, minors, concentrations and the equivalent as reported for the *Undergraduate Program* and *Graduate Program* credits) and other degree programs that do not have specified sustainability learning outcomes, but require the successful completion of one or more sustainability courses (i.e., courses in which the primary and explicit focus is on sustainability as reported for the *Academic Courses* credit).

## C. Applicability

This credit applies to all institutions that have degree programs.

## D. Scoring

Institutions earn the maximum of 8 points available for this credit when all students graduate from programs that have adopted at least one sustainability learning outcome. Incremental points are available based on the percentage of students who graduate from such programs. For example, if half of all students graduate from programs that have specified sustainability learning outcomes, an institution would earn 4 points (half of the points available for this credit).

*Points for this credit are calculated automatically in the STARS Reporting Tool as follows:*

Factor		Number of students that graduate from programs that have adopted at least one sustainability learning outcome		Total number of graduates		Points earned
8	×	_____	÷	_____	=	Up to 8

## E. Reporting Fields

### Required

- ☐ Total number of graduates from degree programs (i.e., majors, minors, concentrations, certificates, and other academic designations)
- ☐ Number of students that graduate from programs that have adopted at least one [sustainability learning outcome](#)
- ☐ Do the figures reported above cover one, two, or three academic years?
- ☐ Does the institution specify sustainability learning outcomes at the institution level (e.g., covering all students)?
- ☐ Does the institution specify sustainability learning outcomes at the division level (e.g., covering particular schools or colleges within the institution)?

*If institution level or division level learning outcomes are specified, provide:*

- ☐ A list or brief description of the institution level or division level sustainability learning outcomes
- ☐ Does the institution specify sustainability learning outcomes at the program level (i.e., majors, minors, concentrations, degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other academic designations)?

*If program level learning outcomes are specified, provide:*

- ☐ A list or brief description of the program level sustainability learning outcomes (or a list of sustainability-focused programs)
- ☐ Do course level sustainability learning outcomes contribute to the figure reported above (i.e., in the absence of program, division, or institution level learning outcomes)?

*If yes, provide:*

- ☐ A list or brief description of the course level sustainability learning outcomes and the programs for which the courses are required

## Optional

- ☐ The website URL where information about the programs or initiatives is available
- ☐ Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- ☐ Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- ☐ Contact information for a responsible party (a staff member, faculty member, or administrator who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

## F. Measurement

### Timeframe

Report the most recent data available within the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission. Institutions may choose to report data from one, two, or three academic years, as long as both the total number of graduates and the number of graduates from programs that have sustainability learning outcomes are measured during the same time period.

### Sampling and Data Standards

Not applicable

## G. Standards and Terms

### Sustainability learning outcomes

Consistent with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), student learning outcomes are defined as:

Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand, and be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning as well as the specific intellectual and practical skills gained and demonstrated by the successful completion of a unit, course, or programme. Learning outcomes, together with assessment criteria, specify the minimum requirements for the award of credit, while grading is based on attainment above or below the minimum requirements for the award of credit. Learning outcomes are distinct from the aims of learning in that they are concerned with the achievements of the learner rather than with the overall intentions of the teacher.

Sustainability learning outcomes are statements that outline the specific sustainability knowledge and skills that a student is expected to have gained and demonstrated by the successful completion of a unit, course, or program. Learning outcomes do not necessarily have to use the term “sustainability” to count as long as they collectively address sustainability as an integrated concept having social, economic, and environmental dimensions. For example, an institution may have adopted a set of sustainability learning outcomes for its general education program that cover systems thinking, interdisciplinary capacities, social responsibility, and an understanding of the carrying capacity of ecosystems. Each outcome does not have to include the term “sustainability” for the set to be considered sustainability learning outcomes. Likewise, however, none of those outcomes would be considered a sustainability learning outcome on its own.

Examples of sustainability learning outcomes include (but are not limited to):

- 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.

### Scoring Example: Learning Outcomes

Example University graduated 1,000 students in the past academic year. Of those students, 250 graduated from programs that have adopted a sustainability learning outcome or multiple sustainability outcomes.

Factor		Number of students that graduate from programs that have adopted at least one sustainability learning outcome		Total number of graduates		Points earned
8	×	<u>250</u>	÷	<u>1,000</u>	=	2.0