

CONNECTING SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHEET

This worksheet is meant to help uncover connections between various sustainability topics or definitions and the knowledge, skills, values, and competencies that could be relevant for students in a particular discipline. It poses a series of questions for users understand “why” sustainability will be important to integrate.

Some considerations to make:

- ✓ The questions are broad, in that they could be applied to any program of study, and as such, some questions may vary in relevance for any individual program.
- ✓ The questions do not depend on any particular definition or understanding of sustainability, but could draw in many different perspectives or focus on specific topics.
- ✓ It is likely valuable to gather a range of opinions and insight into the answers to each question, through group discussion or brainstorming.
- ✓ These questions do not need to be answered in this worksheet. They could be part of a whiteboard activity, post-it note session, or open conversation.

IMPACTS TO LEARNERS

Users of the worksheet would likely find it valuable to start by mapping out current and potential impacts sustainability issues may have for the discipline. Prompting questions could include:

- How might environmental sustainability issues pose **direct or indirect risks** to the types of working environments and activities students will encounter? (i.e. pollution, extreme weather, supply chain disruptions, food/water insecurity etc.)
- How might current or **future regulatory approaches** to advance a sustainable future impact the industries or sectors employing students? (i.e. pollution pricing, disclosures/ transparency, standards/codes, restricted activities, control/abatement requirements etc.)
- How might **changing social norms, values, and expectations** related to sustainability shape ethical or moral codes of conduct in the fields in which students may be working? (i.e. social license to operate, community support/pushback, employee engagement, legal liability and due diligence, partnership alignment)
- How might **evolving economic transitions** to a clean/sustainable economy affect how students engage with their work and stakeholders? (i.e. competitor risks, consumer demand, new product/service offerings, technological change, resource efficiency demands, etc.)

FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Reflecting on the impacts identified above,

- What are the most material sustainability topics or issues that may require deeper understanding to develop competencies in the discipline/field? (i.e. knowledge of relevant theory or history of a topic, exposure to case studies or examples, awareness of differing perspectives and approaches, etc.)
- What basic understanding about relevant sustainability topics will help students be prepared to engage with the connections to their discipline? (i.e. broad familiarity of the topic/issue and how it may intersect with their careers)

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FUTURE-READY SKILLS

- How can the current skills and expertise of the discipline help students be effective parts of the solutions to various sustainability challenges?
- Are there current skills and activities that perpetuate sustainability challenges, and how may these need to shift?
- What new discipline-specific skills will the student need to deploy to navigate sustainability challenges?
- What broad skillsets and abilities can complement discipline-specific expertise? (i.e. systems thinking, collaboration, interdisciplinary work, future-ready talent framework)

VALUES AND ETHICS

- What professional ethics or codes of conduct/practice will students need to understand related to sustainability issues?
- What worldviews or mental modes currently shape activity within the discipline, and how may those be affected by a transition to a sustainable future?
- How do students in the discipline currently value and engage with sustainability in their personal lives, and how may that change over time?

SUSTAINABLE EXPERIENCE

- How can students engage with real-world problems to build competency in sustainability knowledge, skills, and values?
- Can students respectfully participate in dialogue or partnerships with communities navigating sustainability issues?

UNSURE WHERE TO START?

As noted, the above questions are not exhaustive and could be explored through many different formats and settings. If you are interested, the Sustainability Office could also help facilitate a session to walk through some of these questions and topics.