



UN SDG Publishers Compact

Top action tips for graduate students and researchers

Graduate students are preparing to enter an academic and career climate that is 21 percent of the way through a new century, part of a generation burdened with two tasks: addressing the mistakes of the past and forging a habitable future for all. The United Nations Publishers Compact SDG Fellows are confident that these tips will introduce a pathway towards participation in the Sustainable Development Goals. To ensure those choosing the challenge of achieving the SDGs by 2030, below are our recommendations for masters, doctoral and postdoctoral students, who can move the needle by leveraging their personal and institutional power.

1. *Pick an SDG*

Be sure to look at all [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#). They're fairly comprehensive, so you're bound to find something that relates to your personal research project. However, if you can identify an SDG that you'd like to contribute to, you'll have an easier time finding appropriate articles, authors, and networking partners to help you accomplish the task.

2. *Work backwards*

Use your research ideas to interlink them to one or more SDG. Build on that. The sustainable development goals are all interconnected; find the intersection between your SDG and the others as you expand your research. Pivot to a systems-thinking perspective. Go big!

3. *Create your roadmap*

Whether you're honing research questions or compiling a list of topics to discuss with campus stakeholders, it is essential that you think ahead about what you want to know, who and why you're asking, and what you want your ask to be concerning the interconnected SDGs.

4. *Get offline*

Be sure to seek out other students interested in the SDGs. Join your campus' chapter of the [SDG Students Program](#) or find research partners with [The 50 Percent](#) (Formerly The Global Youth Engagement Program) or build a local community of like-minded SDG-oriented folks on your campus (or remotely for those of you taking classes online)

5. *Which office or institute is implementing the sustainability plan?*

Does your campus even have one? Few colleges and universities should be ignorant of the benefits of having an Office of Sustainability. Check with your Provost and see how your

institution supports the SDGs or is addressing energy efficiency in your buildings, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, waste reduction, and even planting trees in your local quad.

6. *Feed your stakeholders*

Who published recently addressing an SDG? Start with your Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee or the equivalent campus group. Who is already engaged in the work? Is there a graduate assistantship or teaching assistantship available for a specific professor? These are all places to start your search for faculty stakeholders in the SDGs.

Can you connect with their assistant to secure a meeting? How about asking a direct question at their next public engagement? Is there a Dean or Provost that would be willing to make an introduction? The president of a college or university is a major player in the decision-making apparatus at your institution of higher education and could turn the tide in favor of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Whether you attend a small liberal arts college, sprawling trade & community college, or large research university, your institution is certainly governed by a Board of Trustees. Seek out your elected student representative to the Board and inform them of all the various ways that this powerful group of people can improve your school by aligning their decision-making to the 17 SDGs.

7. *Circulate with the librarians*

Familiarize yourself with your research library. Is there an option in your library's database to search for books, articles or journals that publish on any one or more of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals? Is there a faculty or staff-member knowledgeable enough to point you to the right location in the stacks? Can you find examples of other graduate student research projects or doctoral dissertations in the repository that address the SDGs? If possible, consider your doctoral research as a three-article dissertation with topics relevant to practitioners and aim to publish in journals that accept *researcher-to-practitioner* perspectives. See this link for more information. When in doubt, go to the library!

8. *Apply for fellowships and get hands-on experience*

Connect with other activists, practitioners and scholars. Apply for paid fellowships like the Global Sustainability Scholars Program or GSS Fellows program. Volunteer as a SDSN Youth 2022 Local Pathways Fellow, Global Voices SDG Youth Fellow, or as a SDG Publishers Compact Fellow. You could even convince your university to join other fellowship programs that allow you to advance the SDGs in partnership with larger organizations and societal goals.

9. *Host a collaborative '17 Rooms' event*

The Rockefeller Foundation and the Brookings Institution created an open-source concept to help organizations identify partnerships and practical steps to accelerate progress on the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. For example, 17 Rooms-U at Mason.

10. *Lace up your shoes and go*

You don't need permission. Just start at the top of this list and work your way down until you not only have one or more SDGs you like, but you're working with others to research, write, and publish--and maybe even get paid while you do it! Sure, there are some stakeholders who might want to have a say if you go the institutional route, but the important thing is to just begin. This list isn't exhaustive. We know you'll expand it through your own efforts!

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