




Uncovering sustainability

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(<https://www.addtoa-sustainability%2F&ti>)

Sustainability is much more than just environment.

In 2011, the University of Utah began incorporating sustainability more broadly into its curriculum. Today, faculty across campus are enhancing education by implementing the big ideas of sustainability—equity, economy, and environment into their courses and departments.

Over 200 courses with a new sustainability attribute and 10 departments with a sustainability learning outcome illuminate the wide reach of sustainability initiatives. Students can locate courses with the new SUSC/SUSL sustainability attribute in the course catalog when signing up for classes.

“We don’t want to limit this large, integrated, conceptual issue of sustainability to a single discipline, set of behaviors, or required course,” said Adrienne Cachelin, director of sustainability education and associate professor in Environmental & Sustainability Studies. “We want to illuminate how and where faculty members are integrating studies of ecological limits with understandings of equity and economic systems. These learning outcomes and course attributes demonstrate the diverse approaches to sustainability education at the U.”

Learning outcomes

(<https://d26toa8f6ahusa.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/30132532/Sustainability-1.jpg>) Learning outcomes are formal statements of the knowledge and skills a student is expected to master by the time they finish their program of study. [Sustainability learning outcomes \(https://sustainability.utah.edu/education/faculty-resources/learning-outcomes/\)](https://sustainability.utah.edu/education/faculty-resources/learning-outcomes/) enable departments to explain their discipline’s unique contributions to the University’s larger commitment to sustainability education.

10 departments have already articulated how their discipline contributes to sustainability education, and more are working on the process.

Course attributes

Even if a department doesn’t yet have a sustainability learning outcome, individual courses from that program can earn a sustainability attribute. There are two tiers in the course attributes:



- **Limited (SUSL)** – awarded to courses that incorporate a unit or module on sustainability or a sustainability challenge.
- **Complete (SUSC)** – awarded to courses whose content identifies and describes the relationship between the course topic, equity, economy, and environmental dimensions.

“A course attribute doesn’t mean the course has to cover every bit of sustainability,” explained Cachelin. “They might be studying one or two of the three big ideas, or it might be the entire course is about something else but they are using a case study that is sustainability-related. These courses are still incredibly valuable for student understanding.”

Faculty wishing to obtain the attribute may [submit their course \(https://sustainability.utah.edu/education/faculty-resources/earning-a-sust-designation/\)](https://sustainability.utah.edu/education/faculty-resources/earning-a-sust-designation/) for review by the Sustainability Education Advisory Committee.

Other resources

For faculty wanting to get involved in sustainability education, the [Wasatch Experience Faculty Workshop \(https://sustainability.utah.edu/education/the-wasatch-experience/\)](https://sustainability.utah.edu/education/the-wasatch-experience/) provides an opportunity for interdisciplinary faculty cohorts to work together to design impactful educational programming.

For students eager to apply their learning from these courses with on-campus projects, the [Sustainability Scholars \(https://sustainability.utah.edu/education/student-resources/sustainability-scholars/\)](https://sustainability.utah.edu/education/student-resources/sustainability-scholars/) program offers a year-long cohort to explore these ideas. This learning community is open to undergraduate students from across campus, and fulfills the Social and Behavioral Sciences requirement for graduation, with a new cohort beginning in Fall 2018.

From learning cohorts to course attributes to learning outcomes, the U’s recent efforts uncover the breadth of sustainability, while supporting those who wish to integrate it into their teaching and learning.

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