

SUSTAINABILITY AUDIT: Background & Instructions

‘Skills for sustainability’ prepare people to cope with, manage and shape social, economic and ecological conditions characterized by change, uncertainty, risk and complexity.

--Stephen Sterling

Centre for Sustainable Futures, Teaching & Learning Directorate (Plymouth University, UK)

Learning for sustainability (LfS): ‘Involves learning to make decisions that provide for the needs of the world’s current population without damaging the ability of future generations to provide for themselves. Sustainability encompasses the intertwined ideals of viable economics, equity and justice and ecological integrity.’

--Curriculum for the Bioregion Initiative, Washington Centre for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education

MTCU Linked Sustainability Defining Skills (Knibb 2012):

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| Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reading ▪ Writing▪ Speaking ▪ Listening▪ Presenting▪ Visual literacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Effective communication▪ Capacity to seek and receive feedback▪ Openness – thinking outside one’s usual way▪ Observation – looking at things differently, deliberately |
| Critical Thinking & Problem Solving | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Analyzing▪ Synthesizing▪ Evaluating▪ Decision-making▪ Creative & innovative thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Systems thinking (e.g. inter-connectedness of ecological, cultural, economic, or political systems)▪ Critical decision-making▪ Ethical/moral decision-making▪ Dealing with complexity/solving complex problems▪ Creative problem solving▪ Assessing technological innovation |
| Interpersonal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Teamwork▪ Relationship management▪ Conflict resolution▪ Leadership▪ Networking | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Capacity to work in inter-generational, culturally diverse environments▪ Conflict resolution▪ Stakeholder engagement and collaboration▪ Ability to understand diverse perspectives |

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| Personal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing self ▪ Managing change & being adaptable ▪ Demonstrating personal responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflective practice ▪ Long-term, future-oriented thinking (envisioning, recognizing implications of one's actions) ▪ Managing change/change agent skills ▪ Adaptability/resilience ▪ Leadership ▪ Continuous learning ▪ Civic responsibility, local/global citizenship |
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MTCU Essential Employability Skills website: <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/audiences/colleges/progstan/essential.html>

Key concepts relating to environmental sustainability

Look for references to:

Reduce human consumption of resources. Reduce impact on nature. Promote clean, sustainable air/water/soil. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Carbon footprint. Local farming. Organic practices. Conservation of resources. Sustainable approach to the physical environment. Interrelation of ecosystems. Ecosystem services. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Maintain a stable resource base. Avoid over-exploitation of renewable resource systems or environmental sink functions. Avoid depleting non-renewable resources. Maintain biodiversity, atmospheric stability, and other ecosystem functions not ordinarily classed as economic resources.

Key concepts relating to social sustainability

Look for references to:

Social justice. Equity. Access/accessibility. Human rights. Human well-being/Wellness. Social equity. Fairness. Labour. Inclusivity. Pluralism. Diversity. Gender equity. LGBTQ equity. Race equity. Aboriginal equity. Eldercare. Early childhood education/headstart. Distributional equity. Intercultural fluency. Quality of life. Global citizenship. Community building. Conflict resolution. Liveable, equitable and prosperous communities.

Key concepts relating to economic sustainability

Look for references to:

Healthy local and national economies . Foster a stable foundation for viable businesses and industries to thrive. Increase opportunities for meaningful employment. Public resources. Investment in the welfare of the population. Sustainable economic growth. People benefitting from economic opportunities. Stimulate sustainable economic growth in developing countries. Build economic foundations. Strengthen public financial management at national, regional and local levels. Improve legal/regulatory frameworks and systems to stabilize economies. Build capacities to sustainably manage natural resources. Strengthen support for micro, small and medium-sized private sector businesses, particularly those owned by women. Increase availability of financial services (including microfinance). Invest in people. Increase access to

demand-driven skills training (including literacy and numeracy). Increase workplace learning opportunities (particularly in agriculture) Support learning initiatives which lead to business growth, market expansion and increased productivity. Work with the private sector as partners in development. Support market-oriented incentives for the private sector to target investments that achieve meaningful development impact. Encourage multistakeholder partnerships with private sector and non-for-profit organizations that clearly benefit people in developing countries. Support innovations that generate game-changing solutions to international development challenges.

Note: economic sustainability also integrates environmental sustainability, equality between women and men, and governance as essential considerations to achieve sustainable economic growth.