



SOAS

Education for Sustainability

Appraisal Toolkit

June 2026

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WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

The Toolkit is for SOAS academic staff in all departments and disciplines for use wherever sustainability interconnects with disciplinary contexts in undergraduate and postgraduate learning and teaching.

The Toolkit is to help with a pedagogical approach that can lead to empowering our students at SOAS to learn to think critically about climate change and sustainability and be proactive changemakers for local and global sustainability transformations. It is not necessarily about adding on additional curriculum content to modules. Rather, the Toolkit is designed to assist reflection, review and appraisal of how and what is currently delivered and if changes would be constructive.

The Toolkit takes an **education for sustainability** pedagogical approach that encourages critical discourse about the models and worldviews that have created the current global challenges in the context of climate change and sustainability. Education for sustainability ‘seeks a transformative role for education’ where students ‘are engaged in a new way of seeing, thinking, learning and working’ and ‘are not only able to explore the relationships between their lives, the environment, social systems and institutions, but also to become active participants and decision-makers in the change process. Educators require a new set of skills, such as envisioning, critical thinking and reflection, dialogue and negotiation, collaboration and building of partnerships.’ ([Tilbury and Wortman 2004](#)).

[SOAS Graduate Attributes](#) include climate and sustainability literacy (see Appendices 1 and 2). This Toolkit is designed to provide staff with support to scope opportunities within the programmes and modules they convene and teach for greater deliberation about sustainability and climate change challenges. Alignment of the Toolkit with SOAS planning and strategy connects via the [SOAS Education Plan](#), the [SOAS Sustainability Strategy](#) and the [SOAS Strategy 2026 – 2030](#). SOAS is committed to ‘Empowering students to become global changemakers’ and to ‘Prioritise active learning, critical thinking, and real-world application in all educational programmes’ ([SOAS 2026a](#)) which are essential parts of education for sustainability. This Toolkit has been devised to contribute to learning and teaching across SOAS so our students graduate as citizens who are culturally, socially and environmentally responsible and proactive changemakers for sustainability ([SOAS 2026b](#)).

THE APPROACH GUIDING THIS TOOLKIT

Thinking behind the Toolkit

The background assumptions behind this Toolkit are linked to the complex challenges of orienting teaching to address sustainability and climate change concerns ([Ripple et al. 2026](#)). The Toolkit focuses on teaching and learning approaches that foster deliberative and critical thinking about sustainability and climate change and societal responses to facilitate change towards sustainability. The Toolkit:

1. Embraces an education for sustainability theory and practice approach.
2. Recognises there is much to be drawn on from the significant work and experiences of SOAS colleagues upholding and employing decolonising, anti-racist, feminist, queer and other heterodox and transformative curricula approaches.
3. Acknowledges that SOAS educators' contributions to sustainability and climate teaching and learning are sensitive to disciplinary viewpoints, personal identities, workloads, internal institutional support, and external higher education influences.

As [Owens et al. \(2023\)](#) say about sustainability education, 'While educators should be free to decide together what and how to teach, the pedagogies adopted should be commensurate with the scale of the [climate change and sustainability] crisis and must provide opportunities for a deep and critical engagement with its social, political and ethical dimensions.' Education for sustainability is not 'add-on' to current educational practice, much of which has been involved in perpetrating the sustainability crisis, but a transformative reappraisal ([Sterling 2017](#), [Owens et al. 2023](#)).

Some key terms and expressions are explored below.

Sustainability versus sustainable development

Sustainability is open to widely different interpretations and takes on different meanings not only between cultures, but also between different groups within societies and different disciplinary contexts. Variants have been characterised as ranging from weak (growth-oriented) to strong (degrowth) ([Ruggerio 2021](#)). The term, **sustainable development**, however, is tied closely to the United Nations and is the result of an international process that defined the concept in the 1987 Brundtland Report ([WCED 1987](#)) as part of mainstream political and international development policy. More recently, the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) ([UNDESA 2015](#)) were

agreed in 2015 for action to 2030 as the core actions of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development policy framework.

Defining education for sustainability

Education for sustainability can be defined as ‘both the **process towards** and the **vision of** sustainability’ ([Wade 2008](#), p.32). Education for sustainability is a pedagogical process that challenges the status quo, forefronts transformative learning and students as change agents. The vision of education for sustainability is that ‘Instead of educational thinking and practice that tacitly assumes that the future is some kind of linear extension of the past, ... [it is] **anticipative** education, recognising the new conditions and discontinuities which face present generations, let alone future ones... This implies a ‘culture of critical commitment’ in educational thinking and practice – engaged enough to make a real difference...but reflexively critical enough to learn constantly from experience.’ ([Sterling 2012a](#), p.514).

SOAS’s vision of education for sustainability is stated in the [SOAS Sustainability Strategy](#).

Our **Sustainability Education Vision**: To ensure our students gain the skills and competencies to actively contribute towards the building of an equitable and just planetary community and protecting the environment through accessible and empowering education experiences rooted in SOAS’ decolonising knowledge approach.

Education for sustainability pedagogy

Education for sustainability, as a **pedagogical approach**, is typically based on futures thinking, critical thinking, systems thinking, participation, partnerships for change, and transformation and change ([Tilbury and Wortman 2004](#), [Scott et al. 2012](#)).

[Lotz-Sisitika et al. \(2015\)](#), [Macintyre, de Sousa and Wals \(2024\)](#) and [Hastanga et al. \(2025\)](#) emphasise a reimagined approach to education for sustainability that visibly embraces decolonialisation. They identify that there can be a gap between pedagogy and practice if transformative learning and teaching for sustainability and climate change is not introduced from a decolonising perspective. Table 1 (see p. 5 over) details principles and practice for education for sustainability where decolonial thinking is a key principle.

Table 1 Education for Sustainability Principles and Practice (compiled and adapted from [Tilbury and Wortman 2004](#), pp.16,32, 50-52, 64, 78, [Scott et al. 2012](#), p.115, [Macintyre, de Sousa and Wals 2024](#), p.825 and [Hastanga et al. 2025](#), pp.478, 484)

Principles	Elements of Education for Sustainability Practice
Futures thinking	Futures thinking engages students in developing a shared vision, helping to clarify their values, inspire hope and, above all, lead to action plans for change towards a more sustainable future.
Decolonial thinking	Decolonial thinking in education for sustainability embraces epistemic justice and pluralism recognizing diverse ways of knowing, being, and relating to the Earth. Western-centric frameworks and ideological assumptions that influence sustainability transitions discourses, development, knowledge and progress are interrogated by learners. Students engage with local worldviews, contextual realities and pedagogies and consider place-based alternatives to mainstream sustainability thinking.
Critical thinking	Critical thinking leads to a deeper understanding of the interests behind power and politics locally and globally. Along with values clarification, critical thinking helps students to reflect on personal experiences and world views and to challenge accepted ways of interpreting and engaging with the world in taking action to work towards sustainability.
Participation	Through participation , learners are at the centre of the active participatory experience with learning, facilitation and decision-making in the hands of the learners themselves. Participation for sustainability importantly recognises the value and relevance of local knowledge. Education for sustainability recognises participation as critical for engaging groups and individuals in the process of efforts to move towards sustainability.
Systems thinking	Education for sustainability aims to equip people to understand connections between environmental, economic, social and political systems. Systems thinking offers a better way to understand and manage situations marked by complexity. Systems thinking emphasises integration, 'joined-up thinking', transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary and participative approaches, all of which challenge education to respond similarly.
Partnerships for change	Education for sustainability focuses on the use of genuine partnerships to build networks and relationships and improve communication between different sectors of society. Partnerships which involve shared learning experiences can accelerate the process for change towards sustainability. They help to combine resources and talents, break hierarchies, build shared visions and motivate action for the future.
Transformation and change	Education for sustainability is not simply about providing information but involves equipping students with the skills, capacity and motivation to plan and initiate transformation and manage change towards sustainability within an organisation, industry or community.

Sustainability competencies

Equipping students with **sustainability competencies** is a prime learning objective of education for sustainability. These competencies are widely agreed in the education for sustainability literature as systems thinking, anticipatory, normative, strategic thinking, interpersonal, implementation and integration competencies ([Dlouhá et al. 2019](#), [Bianchi 2020](#), [Redman and Wiek 2021](#)) (see Table 2 below). Sustainability competencies complement the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values gained as disciplinary competencies in higher education. In Education for Sustainable Development guidance ([UNESCO 2017](#), p.10) similar cross-cutting competencies are advocated.

Table 2 Education for Sustainability Competencies (adapted from [Redman and Wiek 2021](#), p.6)

Competencies	Descriptions
Systems thinking competence	Ability to analyse: 1) complex systems and sustainability problems across different domains (environmental, social, economic) and across different scales (local to global) 2) the impacts of sustainability action plans (strategies) and interventions (how they change systems and problems).
Anticipatory competence	Ability to identify, map, specify, negotiate, and apply sustainability values, principles, and goals: 1) to assess the sustainability of current and/or future states of complex systems 2) to construct sustainability visions for these systems 3) to assess the sustainability of action plans (strategies) and interventions.
Normative competence	Ability to identify, map, specify, negotiate, and apply sustainability values, principles, and goals: 1) to assess the sustainability of current and/or future states of complex systems 2) to construct sustainability visions for these systems 3) to assess the sustainability of action plans (strategies) and interventions.
Strategic thinking competence	Ability to construct and test viable strategies (action plans) for interventions, transitions, and transformations toward sustainability.
Interpersonal competence	Ability to collaborate successfully in inter-disciplinary and professional teams and to involve diverse stakeholders, in meaningful and effective ways, in advancing sustainability transformations.
Implementation competence	Ability to put sustainability strategies (action plans) into action, including implementation, adaptation, transfer and scaling, in effective and efficient ways.
Integration competence	Ability to apply collective problem-solving procedures to complex sustainability problems: 1) to develop viable sustainability strategies (action plans) 2) successfully implement them, in collaborative and self-caring ways.

Education for sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development: Parallels and differences

In contrast to education for sustainability, **Education for Sustainable Development** is an endorsed UNESCO framework with a history of implementation from the 1992 Rio conference (UNCED). Implementation plans 2020 – 2030 for the UN programme can be found in the [UNESCO \(2020\) ESD for 2030 Roadmap](#). UNESCO promotes Education for Sustainable Development as the key to unlocking progress in all the Sustainable Development Goals ([UNESCO 2026](#)). In contrast, academic critics call for decolonisation of Education for Sustainable Development as it is tied to western-centric worldviews, dominant development discourses and power relations ([Manteaw 2009](#), [Keet and Rafaely 2025](#), [LenkaBula and Ngoepe 2025](#)).

The parallels between education for sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development arise because education for sustainability pedagogical approaches first developed by academics directly shaped the development of UN programmes for Education for Sustainable Development particularly during the UN Decade for Sustainable Development 2005 – 2014 ([UNESCO 2014](#)). The term education for sustainability is purposely used by SOAS rather than Education for Sustainable Development.

USING THIS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL TOOLKIT

The **education for sustainability (EfS)** appraisal process recommended here is for diagnostic analysis of current modules and programmes to pinpoint where EfS principles, practice and competencies are being addressed in learning and teaching and to assess the potential for adoption or further incorporation. Appraisal of undergraduate or postgraduate modules or programmes can be done individually, together with one or more colleagues, or collaboratively in a department.



Figure 1 Steps to appraise EfS in the curriculum (adapted from QAA's [White et al. 2023](#))

Below are guidelines for an iterative and reflective process of six steps for probing current learning and teaching pedagogy and curricula for where sustainability and climate change concerns and responses intersect, and how they align with education for sustainability principles. This has been customised for module and programme use from guidance from a Collaborative Enhancement Project supported and funded by UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) ([White et al. 2023](#)) for institutional monitoring and evaluation. Each step is supported by Toolkit resources. Figure 1 above diagrammatically shows the iterative process of discussion, scoping, planning, action, evaluation and reflection which can lead to subsequent cycles of enhancement. Procedures for the EfS appraisal steps are listed in Table 3 (see p. 9 over).

Step 1: Discuss

This first step is to assess, discuss and debate what EfS means in the context of your module, programme or department. Reflecting, learning, sharing and brainstorming is part of this process. It is an envisioning process that requires assessing how EfS aligns with current pedagogical approaches and how these processes could be enhanced.

Table 3 Education for Sustainability Appraisal Steps

EfS Appraisal Step	Step Procedure
Discuss	Debate the meanings and definitions of EfS for a particular module or programme context, appraise current pedagogy
Scope	Scope existing EfS themes and approaches, map curricula activity, consider topics, and adoption of EfS pedagogy and key competencies
Plan	Collaboratively agree goals and an action plan
Action	Take action with EfS initiatives, deepen and strengthen EfS
Evaluate	Assess impacts of EfS in short and medium term
Reflect	Reflect on EfS processes, practices outcomes and impacts, learn from experience and others, celebrate achievements

Reflective questions:

- How does EfS apply in your context?
- Does EfS relevance vary between different modules and programmes?
- What are the current pedagogical approaches or framings used and how do they align or differ from EfS?
- Consider critique of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), how does this situate the relevance of EfS for your teaching?
- What resources for EfS approaches e.g. for developing students' sustainability competencies might be of practical help?
- Consider how SOAS's institutional learning and teaching structures and approval processes could potentially intersect with EfS changes
- Do staff have dedicated time to consider EfS enhancements? How can this be made possible? How will staff capacity to teach EfS be supported?

Toolkit resources:

EfS

Faculty for a Future (2026) [Seed Library](#) This is an open-access database of multiple pedagogical approaches to transformative education.

Open Learn Create (2026) [Sustainability Words of Wisdom: Examples from Higher Education](#) This is an Open University online resource of sustainability education practice and reflections on practice.

Owens (2023) [Conceptualising HE educators' capabilities to teach the crisis: towards critical and transformative environmental pedagogies](#) This paper discusses the challenges for higher education educators in attempting to 'teach the environmental crisis in ways that support critical thinking and promote social transformation.' (Owens et al.2023, p.1)

Irwin (2023) [Can Education Outgrow the Rhetoric of 'Development' Embedded in the UN Sustainability Goals?](#) This paper critiques education about the SDGs being restricted to neoliberal perspectives and concludes that the 'Limiting education to liberal concerns means ignoring the pressing reality of climate change...' (Irwin 2023, p. 55)

Sterling (2021) [Concern, Conception, and Consequence: Re-thinking the Paradigm of Higher Education in Dangerous Times](#) This paper addresses the causal factors that obstruct universities in responding effectively to sustainability education for the global predicament.

Sterling (2025) [Truly Transformative? Why ESD Falls Short in Epochal Times](#) This paper critiques ESD and argues for a 'conscious adoption of an emergent ecological or relational worldview in order to transcend the persistent and narrowing effects of mechanistic, neoliberal and economistic influences on educational thinking and practice.' (Sterling 2025, p. 235)

Wals (2022) [Transgressive learning, resistance pedagogy and disruptive capacity building as levers for sustainability](#) This paper argues that education needs to break away for supporting business-as-usual which means more than educating for sustainability competencies.

ESD and SDGs

Dlouhá et al. (2019) [Competences to Address SDGs in Higher Education—A Reflection on the Equilibrium between Systemic and Personal Approaches to Achieve Transformative Action](#)

QAA / AdvanceHE (2021) [Education for Sustainable Development Guidance](#)

UNESCO (n.d.) [Cross-cutting and specialized SDG competencies](#)

UNESCO (2017) [Education for Sustainable Development Goals: learning objectives](#)

Step 2: Scope

The second step is to map **where** EfS is already contained in your module, or modules in your programme, or modules in your department's programmes overall. A first scoping of core / compulsory modules in programmes is a useful approach for mapping of student exposure to EfS. Scope by reviewing EfS content, topics and themes adopted, pedagogical approaches, and types of assessment used. Scoping usually starts with sustainability and climate change content but making observations about pedagogical approach and sustainability competencies students acquire are valuable.

Try to go beyond a content ‘tick box’ approach. The QAA/ AdvanceHE [Education for Sustainable Development Guidance](#) recommends the SDGs as a ‘useful starting point’ (QAA / AdvanceHE 2021, p.10) and SDGs are being used by many academics in UK universities but there are alternative approaches e.g. the student-led [Anti-Greenwash Education Kit](#) (Hughes et al. 2023).

Table 3 (see below) has been included below to assist in starting to scope and do a mapping of current programmes and modules. The mapping could be carried out:

- By module or programme convenors individually
- In partnership with academic colleagues
- In partnership with students to identify EfS in their programme
- In consultation with a learning and teaching specialist

Reflective questions:

- Who will be involved in the scoping process? Programme and module convenors would initiate the process with support from Learning and Teaching Enhancement, but other departments may be affected where guided or compulsory modules are being appraised that run across departments.
- Can students be involved in the mapping as co-creators? Could those currently in the programme or enrolled in a module assist in a co-creator role, or students from outside as part of a SOAS Co-Creator Internship project.
- What scoping process will be used in your context?
- Are there points of alignment with EfS in current learning and teaching delivery and assessment?
- Which EfS pedagogical principles and practice are already incorporated?
- What curriculum entry points exist for sustainability and climate change to be incorporated?
- What framework for assessing module and programme content will you adopt?

Toolkit resources:

Use of Table 4 (see p. 12 over) is recommended for a programme or module mapping or scoping exercise using the EfS skills (principles and practice) and competencies.

Table 4 Scoping / Mapping Approach for Programmes or Modules

Scoping/mapping programmes and modules							
Programme/Module	Sustainability Content	How it Appears in Module Content or Practice	Assessment Design	EfS Skills/Competencies	Evidence	Level of Integration (None / Emerging / Developed / Embedded)	Gaps/Opportunities

EfS

Hughes et al. (2023) [Anti-greenwash education kit](#) This is a useful resource developed by University of Gloucestershire, University of the Arts London and King's College London students and academics in a QAA funded project (QAA et al. 2023). Advice is given on what quality versus 'greenwash' is in curricula addressing sustainability.

QAA et al. (2023) [Students Driving Curriculum Quality for Sustainability](#)

Ryan (2023) [How to ensure quality when embedding sustainability into the curriculum](#)

University of Gloucestershire (2012) [Education for Sustainability: A Guide for Educators on Teaching and Learning Approaches](#)

ESD and SDGs

QAA / AdvanceHE (2021) [Education for Sustainable Development Guidance](#)

EAUC (2023) [Fusion Skills: Education for Sustainable Development Toolkit](#)

SDG Action (2026) [The Sustainable Development Goals](#)

UNESCO (2017) [Education for Sustainable Development Goals: learning objectives](#)

Step 3: Plan

This step involves deciding on goals and an action plan with a timeline for the EfS adjustments that are to be made to programme or module curricula. Overall, this requires decision-making about what will constitute EfS inclusion in a programme or module. This could be done in collaborative agreement for a programme or individually for modules.

Reflective questions:

- What new EfS pedagogy or competencies to be included in learning activities, assessment approaches or informal skills development?
- What new sustainability and climate change knowledge, that is relevant and linked to the disciplinary focus, and with a decolonial understanding, is to be included in core / compulsory modules?

- Will there be at least inclusion of EfS pedagogy, competencies and knowledge in one core module for each year level in an undergraduate programme?
- Similarly, for postgraduate programmes, will there be inclusion of EfS pedagogy, competencies and knowledge in at least one core / compulsory module.
- Is use of AI (artificial intelligence) in the learning and teaching of a module or programme addressed from an EfS perspective regarding enhancements to deepen student's understanding and ethical and sustainability challenges?
- What support is available for programme and module convenors in planning enhancement of curricula with EfS? Is that support being accessed?
- Does the inclusion of EfS require requests for programme or module changes within existing SOAS curriculum quality systems while attempting to implement transformative change?
- When will the programme or module EfS appraisal plan be rolled out?
- What resources from SOAS will be used for supporting the appraisal process?
- Are students involved as co-creators?
- Has a Critical Friend been invited to be part of the programme or module appraisal for planning, action, evaluation and reflection process?

Toolkit resources:

EfS

Faculty for a Future (2026) [Seed Library](#) This is an open-access database of multiple pedagogical approaches to transformative education.

Hughes et al. (2023) [Anti-greenwash education kit](#) This is a useful resource developed by University of Gloucestershire, University of the Arts London and King's College London students and academics in a QAA funded project. Advice is given on what quality versus 'greenwash' is in curricula addressing sustainability.

Leal Filho et al. (2025) [Using artificial intelligence in sustainability teaching and learning](#) This paper weighs the deployment of AI in EfS learning and teaching from the perspective of enhancing educational outcomes but also raises the ethical and sustainability challenges.

[Macintyre, de Sousa and Wals \(2024\)](#) This paper discusses building a regenerative decolonisation perspective into EfS.

Open Learn Create (2026) [Sustainability Words of Wisdom: Examples from Higher Education](#) This is an Open University online resource of sustainability education practice and reflections on practice.

University of Gloucestershire (2026) [Quality Principles](#)

ESD and SDGs

QAA / AdvanceHE (2021) [Education for Sustainable Development Guidance](#)

EAUC (2023) [Fusion Skills: Education for Sustainable Development Toolkit](#)

QAA (2023) [Education for Sustainable Development and Academic Quality Principles and Processes for Higher Education Providers](#)

Step 4: Action

This step involves acting on plans developed for EfS to deepen and strengthen inclusion in programmes and modules.

Reflective questions:

- How is staff capacity to implement learning and teaching about EfS being supported?
- Have staff including tutors been prepared and supported through provision and uptake of CPD training in EfS?
- How are students involved and what are their initial responses?
- How are success stories and disappointments being documented?

Step 5: Evaluate

Assess impacts of EfS in the short term and the medium term over one or two calendar years.

Reflective questions:

- Is sustainability learning addressing cross-cutting social, environmental and economic issues evident in the programme or module?
- Is EfS integrated all levels of study in an undergraduate programme or across modules in postgraduate taught programme?
- Are EfS approaches integrated as part of assessment design?
- Has there been a change in students' development of sustainability and climate change knowledge, skills and competencies including real world examples of climate change impacts and impacts on sustainability?
- Is there a difference in the module's interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity and is there change in the creativity and innovation in the module?
- How can student perspectives on their experiences of changes in EfS pedagogy, competencies and content in modules and programmes be captured, and how can students be engaged to discuss their EfS experience?
- To what extent could EfS in core or compulsory modules of a programme create change in learners' understandings of where their disciplinary learning and teaching is linked with sustainability and climate change issues?

- Is EfS in core programme modules motivating students to enrol in elective modules focussed on aspects of sustainability and climate change and / or sustainability and climate activities outside the formal curriculum.
- What feedback has been given by a Critical Friend on the appraisal outcomes?

Step 6: Reflect

This final step is to reflect on EfS processes, practices, outcomes and impacts, and to learn from experiences of all, and to celebrate achievements.

Reflective questions:

- What has been learnt from EfS experiences with changes in curricula for programmes and modules and how can this learning be used for future semesters and years?
- How will this learning be shared within the department and more broadly across SOAS?
- To what extent can EfS in a programme or module create change and transformation in learners' graduate attributes?
- What reflections have been given by a Critical Friend on the appraisal process?
- Has this EfS Appraisal Toolkit approach and assumptions been useful? Feedback via Department Learning and Teaching Convenors or LTE Education Development Partners is welcomed.

RESOURCES AND FURTHER HELP

- Contact for advice the **Education Development Partner** for your Department from [Learning and Teaching Enhancement](#) (LTE).
- Access the LTE Education for Sustainability Resources via the [Teaching Strategies](#) SharePoint.
- Enrol in the SOAS [Education for Sustainability](#) CPD course:

Education for Sustainability

This course offers an introduction to education for sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) according to the QAA guidance. There is a strong focus on embedding education for sustainability in curriculum design. This course will address teaching, learning and assessment approaches, as well as key competencies for the development of module learning outcomes.

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APPENDIX 1

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY, OUR GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES AND THE MYSKILLS PORTFOLIO

[SOAS Graduate Attributes](#) include climate and sustainability literacy. SOAS Careers and LTE provide professional development tools to enable colleagues to surface graduate attributes and employability skills within the curriculum, including skills associated with sustainability literacy. A repository of resources on this topic is available on our [Surfacing employability in the curriculum](#) LTE pages under the heading ‘mapping skills templates and examples’.

Alongside this, SOAS students are empowered to articulate skills developed across their time at SOAS to support their future success. The new MYSKILLS Portfolio uses our revised SOAS Graduate Attributes skills taxonomy (please see Appendix 2) and enables students to self-assess their skills as well as participate in interactive pathways to gain ideas around how to develop those skills.

This tool supports them to articulate the value of a SOAS degree for future study, employment and other life goals; talk about their skills in the professional sphere; enable self-reflection and self-assessment; and evaluate their own skills and identify potential development needs. This facilitates graduate understanding of the ways in which learning experiences, including work-based learning, contribute to achieving career and life goals and ambitions. To find out more please view our [short video](#) or see Appendix 2.

When using the MySKILLS Portfolio students can assess their levels of cultural, social and environmental responsibility e.g.:

Culturally, socially and environmentally responsible

Definition: Making a positive impact on the environment and society as a whole.

- I have limited awareness of cultural difference, political and environmental issues.
- I am broadly aware of cultural differences, political issues, climate and sustainability issues and am environmentally responsible.
- I have a thorough awareness of cultural differences and political issues, and I am environmentally literate.
- I have a curious desire to expand my cultural knowledge, respect and celebrate difference. With my climate and sustainability literacy, I am culturally, socially and environmentally responsible.

Skills Statements and Digital Badging

Students can also create skills statements which record skills development. We are investigating a pilot wherein students can be provided with a digital badge called, for example, ‘Sustainability Literacy’ as a result of completing a skills statement on this area.

Create a skill statement

X

Activity title

Summary of activity

Activity description

Description of the activity

0 chrs

Associated skills

Custom labels

optional

Type in a tag (max 100 characters), then press enter

Reflections

optional

Any personal or skills-related learnings and observations from the experience gained. Max 2000 characters.

0 chrs

Cancel

Create

Students could evidence sustainability literacy from the following:

- **Academic work** including active learning, in curriculum work aligned learning such as employer briefs, panels and Q&As
- **Intercultural and International experiences** for example language learning, study abroad and international opportunities, as well as work-based learning in international organisations
- **Employer-informed careers education** including careers fairs, employer events, networking events
- **Skills workshops** including study skills workshops and career development learning workshops
- **Work based learning** including Virtual Industry Projects, placement modules, SOAS Summer Internship Programme, Co-Creator Internship Programme, Postgraduate Work Placement Year, Year in Industry, Pro Bono work, Law clinics and placements, freelance work, self-employment and enterprise
- **Roles at SOAS** including Student Union roles and Societies, Library roles, SOAS Student Ambassador Scheme, Department/ College Reps, SOAS Content Creator Roles, Peer mentoring
- **External roles** including job shadowing, volunteering, mentoring part-time work, virtual and face-to-face internships, insight programmes.

SOAS Graduate Attributes Skills Taxonomy

This taxonomy uses our SOAS Graduate Attributes and outlines a common language of skills for use across the institution.

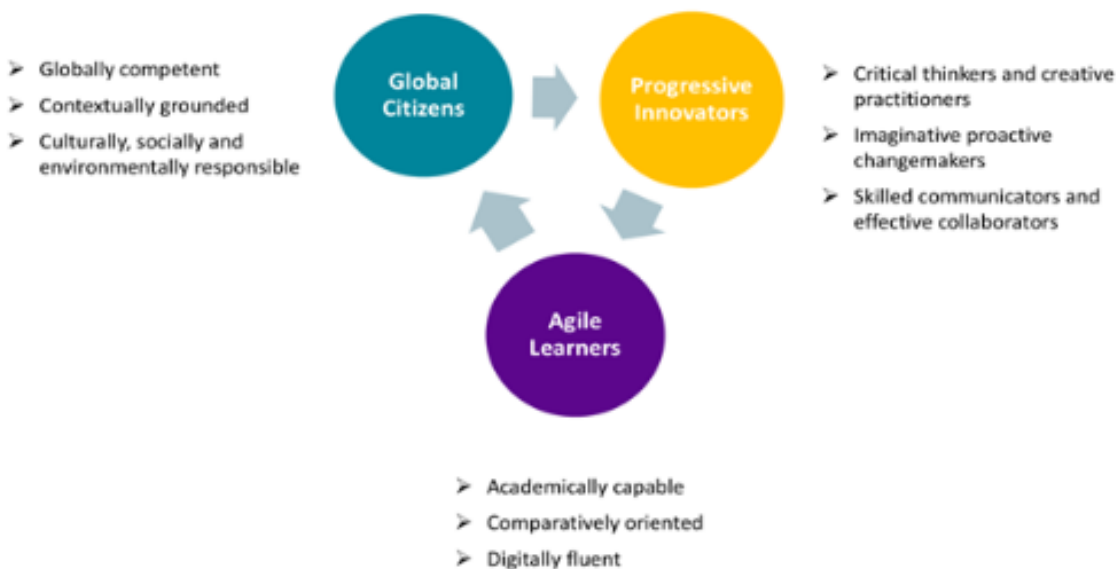
The skills have been organised under the three pillars of the Graduate [Attributes](#) and this resource has been developed to describe and help communicate the characteristics of SOAS graduates. The taxonomy is non-hierarchical.

Its uses include (but are not limited to) the identification of skills inherently embedded in degree programmes and modules; external marketing relating to skills gained by SOAS students and graduates; and Careers resources and information.

This taxonomy can be used alongside the *Employability Skills Grid* when surfacing skills in specific modules in intended learning outcomes (ILOs), teaching and learning, and assessment activities.

Whilst the skills in this taxonomy are generic, the ways in which they are gained by students will be specific to each context and connected to their subject learning.

SOAS Graduate Attributes



Global Citizens
SOAS graduates are globally competent, able to adapt internationally with skilful intercultural communication and an inclusive and ethical approach to leadership and team working. They are contextually grounded, sensitive to pluralities of lived experience, using their deep understanding and respect for situated cultural practices to inform their nuanced and diplomatic approach to difficult global issues. With a curious desire to expand their cultural knowledge, SOAS graduates respect and celebrate difference; and with their climate and sustainability literacy they are culturally, socially and environmentally responsible.
Globally competent
Adaptability and flexibility
Relationship building and interpersonal skills
Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Contextually grounded
Contextual awareness
Application of theory to practice
Empathy
Culturally, socially and environmentally responsible
Cultural and political awareness
Climate and sustainability awareness
Commercial and economic awareness
Progressive innovators
SOAS graduates are critical thinkers and creative practitioners fluent in analysis, who use research, evaluation and independent enquiry skills to reach evidence-based decisions. Imaginative proactive changemakers, they are curious and open-minded, co-creating solutions to problems and taking transformative action. Skilled in working in diverse teams and creating inclusive environments, SOAS graduates are skilled communicators and effective collaborators who have co-creative skills in producing and revising knowledge, as well as communicating it verbally and in writing.
Critical thinkers and creative practitioners
Analytical skills
Critical thinking
Creativity and innovation
Imaginative proactive changemakers
Proactivity and initiative
Problem solving
Questioning and logic
Skilled communicators and effective collaborators
Negotiation and persuasion
Teamwork and collaboration
Communication and presentation

Agile Learners

SOAS graduates are **academically capable**, demonstrating intellectual curiosity and flexibility whilst engaging critically with knowledge development, as well as reflecting on their own learning.

Comparatively oriented, they display interdisciplinary thinking, confidently navigating plurality and analysing multiple sources of knowledge and learning.

Highly data literate, SOAS graduates are **digitally fluent**, with skilled use of digital tools and platforms whilst exercising judgement in their competent, ethical, and responsible use of AI.

Academically capable

Self-motivation and personal accountability

Time and project management

Research and enquiry

Reflective and responsive to feedback

Confidence and leadership

Comparatively oriented

Reasoning and judgement

Synthesis and evaluation

Digitally fluent

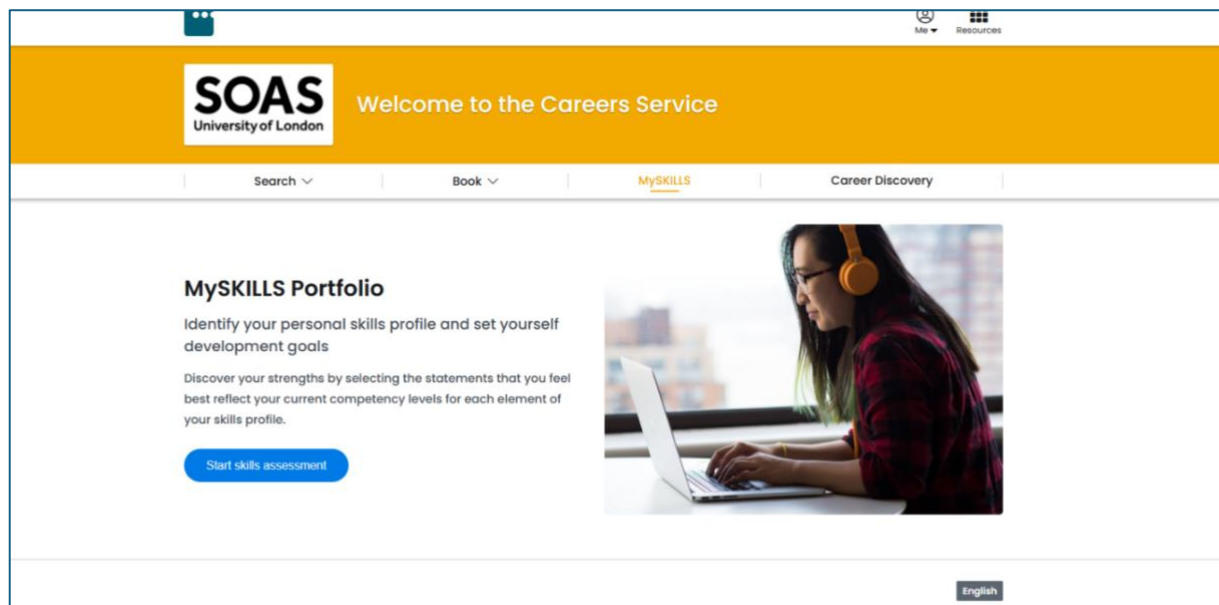
Data and digital literacy

AI literacy and responsibility

APPENDIX 2

THE MYSKILLS PORTFOLIO: A NEW DIGITAL SKILLS SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR STUDENTS

When students login to CareersZONE, they will see the MySKILLS tab which takes them to the assessment.



They will be taken through a list of 9 statements under the 3 main Graduate Attributes to help them map their skills depending on level of competency. For example:

A screenshot of the MySKILLS Portfolio assessment interface. It shows '1 of 9' statements with a progress bar. The section is titled 'Global Citizens' with the sub-header 'Globally Competent'. The definition is 'knowledge of global issues, being inclusive and collaborative.' The instruction is 'Select the statement that's most relevant to you now'. There are four radio button options: 1. 'I have some knowledge of global issues. I have limited experience of working in a team.' 2. 'I am aware of how to adapt my intercultural communication. I have some experience of working in a team.' 3. 'I know how to be ethical and inclusive when working with others. I have experience of working effectively in a team and/ or in leadership roles.' 4. 'I am globally competent, able to adapt internationally with skilful intercultural communication. I have an inclusive and ethical approach to leadership and team working.' A blue 'Next' button is at the bottom right.

Once the assessment is complete, students will then see their current level of competency for each attribute (Developing, Competent, Proficient, Advanced). By clicking on the speech bubble next to each attribute under the skills list, students can find out how to develop their skills further, with also a link to specific target connect pathways.

The screenshot shows the 'MySKILLS Portfolio' interface. At the top, there are four tabs: 'MySKILLS profile' (selected), 'Skill statements', 'My history', and 'Retake assessment'. Below the tabs, the section is titled 'Skills in development'. It contains a paragraph explaining that students gain skills through studies and experiences, and that the portfolio helps track and develop these skills. Below the text is a pin icon with the text 'Pin your important skills to help track which ones you are developing.' Below this is a 'Skills list' section. It contains three items, each with a checkbox, a skill name, a progress bar, a proficiency level, and a 'SOAS Careers Pathways' button with a '+' icon and a speech bubble icon.

Skill	Proficiency	SOAS Careers Pathways
☐ Global Citizens	PROFICIENT	SOAS Careers Pathways +
☐ Progressive innovators	PROFICIENT	SOAS Careers Pathways +
☐ Agile Learners	ADVANCED	SOAS Careers Pathways +

Students can add their own skills statements to the Portfolio as a place to track achievements.

The screenshot shows the 'MySKILLS Portfolio' interface with the 'Skill statements' tab selected. The section is titled 'What is a skill statement?'. It contains two paragraphs explaining what skill statements are and how to use them. Below the text is a blue button with a '+' icon and the text 'Add new'.

What is a skill statement?

Skill statements are records of activities completed that you feel have helped develop an element of your skills profile. Whether academic, professional, sporting, voluntary or any other, it's important to reflect on the value and learnings different experiences bring. Creating a record of Skill Statements is a great way to focus and track your achievement.

Identify examples of times you have used or developed skills that will be useful to use as examples in applications and interviews. Reflecting on which skills you have enjoyed can help you make careers decisions. Use this section to add new skills which can be linked to the SOAS graduate attributes. Further information on skills can be found on [MySOAS Student](#).

[+ Add new](#)

Students can retake their assessment at a later date and then compare their progress.

