

**Response submitted online**

<https://bit.ly/2Eyzb0k>

01 March 2019



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Dear Dame Shirley Pearce,

Please find below our consultation response on the Teaching Excellence Framework.

**Consultation: Independent Review of TEF: Call for views****ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION FOR UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (EAUC):**

Response on behalf of our Members (United Kingdom and Ireland)

**About the EAUC**

Our passion is to create a world with sustainability at its heart. That's our vision. We exist to lead and empower the post-16 education sector to make sustainability 'just good business'.

The membership of the EAUC comprises higher and further educational institutions, with a combined budget of some £25 billion, responsible for educating over 2 million students supported by half a million staff.

We have regional and country chapters, with member institutions connected deeply with business, industry, health and civic bodies at local levels, with reach internationally via their research, innovation and student mobility.

**We believe**

- That UK and Irish education should be a global leader in sustainability
- That educational institutions have a responsibility as anchors in their communities to be agents of change
- That education has a unique opportunity to transform lives and communities
- That education is at the heart of global sustainability
- That every student should have access to sustainability education
- That education should reflect best practice in operational sustainability
- In being flexible and adaptable to find solutions for a resilient future
- In the value of international collaboration

**Our values**

- Pioneering - driving sustainability through innovation
- Independence - our own unique voice
- Collaboration - together we go further
- Role Model - leading by example
- Empowering - supporting and inspiring our members

## **EAUC's Approach to the Inquiry**

Having carefully considered the consultation queries, we felt strongly that we were best placed to focus on one question. That question was no.13, which asked about the TEF criteria. It is here that we feel the need to question why sustainability is not included in the criteria. Sustainability skills are essential for future-proofed and resilient graduates. They are a necessity for anyone with leadership aspirations and an increase in innovation and productivity will only be achieved if people have this ability. We provide more information below and hope it is of use.

### **Response to the consultation:**

*13. Are the criteria used in TEF (see Figure 1 for a list of the criteria) appropriate?  
If not, what criteria would be more appropriate?*

EAUC is the alliance for sustainability leadership in tertiary education. We think the criteria is appropriate but we are concerned that this criteria is not better future proofed. Skills in sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) remain lacking from the framework – and these are required to ensure young people can deal with growing issues that abound in the imbalance of the environment, the economy and society.

These are the skills that allows students to handle complicated problems with an understanding of interdisciplinary perspectives. They are a necessity for anyone with leadership aspirations and an increase in innovation and productivity will only be achieved if people have this ability. More than that – these skills form key graduate attributes sought by businesses and organisations seeking opportunity and resilience. Consumer awareness and purchasing power lean heavily towards ethically-sourced products/services and the private sector are increasingly finding themselves facing challenges that require resilience and socially-aware ways of thinking. Only last year the Nespresso Chief Executive Jean-Marc Duvoisin was talking about the competitive advantage sustainability gives a business. Businesses like Unilever, M&S and Mars all have Chief Executives forcing sustainability to the top of their business agenda – moving away from the idea that it is a 'nice to have' these days and reinforcing its position as the foundation for good business. We are missing a huge trick with the TEF if we are not seeking to future proof students with these skills.

Also, students want these skills. They value sustainability, ethics and the notion of social and organisational responsibility. NUS research shows 3 in 4 students would choose to work for a company that pays less but has a strong environmental and social record. But less than half of post-16 education institutions have sustainability related attributes in the graduate attributes developed by their institution. That's over half of colleges and universities in the UK that are not even recognising this as an important skill. This is where the Government has an opportunity to step in, show the value of these skills, and ensure they are mandatory. This will also require investment in staff to ensure they are upskilled themselves with sustainability knowledge.

There are metrics in the NSS that could provide some information on this, but they are only bank questions and we would encourage the Department for Education to discuss with the Office for Students about making them part of the mandatory survey. In addition, the questions should move away from Environmental Sustainability towards Environmental and Social Sustainability to ensure all of the information is captured sufficiently. The bank questions are:

#### *Environmental sustainability*

- *My institution encourages good environmental practice*
- *My course has encouraged me to think about environmental sustainability*
- *I have had opportunities to take part in activities supporting environmental sustainability*



Sustainability is a necessary life skill and shouldn't sit in a silo either, it should be integrated into all study programmes as an investment in graduates across all fields, that will be needed to fill career opportunities created by a low-carbon world.

We urge the Department for Education to ensure the TEF looks again at how to better future-proof the next generation with these skills. We welcome dialogue on this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Iain A Patton'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'I'.

Iain Patton, CEO, EAUC