



**Cultural Shift or Accommodation? a snapshot of education
for sustainable development in English higher education**

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1. Much activity since 1990
2. Enthusiastic leadership by the funding council [HEFCE]
3. Devolved interest across the sector
4. Progress on environmental management
5. Growth in research related to sustainable development
6. More development in universities than in schools
7. Support from the Higher Education Academy [HEA]



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The purpose of the Higher Education Academy's ESD Project is:

“to help institutions and subject communities develop curricula and pedagogy that will give students the skills and knowledge to live and work sustainably.”



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A definition of sustainable development research [and teaching]

“research [and teaching] that contains a significant element of work related to either or both of the natural environment and natural resources, **plus** a significant element of work related to either or both of economic or social issues.”



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1.

There is more of a perception in universities that sustainability requires accommodation as regards curricular content, with less agreement that ESD needs to involve pedagogic change and renewal, interdisciplinarity and appropriate policies at the level of the institution



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2.

There remains confusion about the qualitative difference between ‘embedding sustainable development in education’, on the one hand, and reorientation towards ‘education for sustainable development’ as a more holistic response involving cultural change, on the other. The term ‘ESD’ remains contested.



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