



SOS-UK 2024/25

Student Skills Survey

**UNIVERSITY OF
STRATHCLYDE**

March 2025



UNIVERSITY of STRATHCLYDE
CENTRE FOR
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT



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Executive Summary

Key Highlights

- The reputation of place of study remained highly important for our students (89%) with environmental and social commitments playing a big role in students' perceptions.
- Students showed a strong preference for active incorporation of Sustainable Development in everything the University (85%), and Student Union (83%) does.
- Students feel strongly that the University should be obliged to develop students social and environmental skills as part of their courses (85%)
- Students are proud to be part of a University (69%) and Student Union (67%) that actively take action to limit their negative impact on the environment and society.
- 65% feel that during their time at the University they have been encouraged to think and act about helping the environment and other people.
- 70% of students felt prepared at some level to meet the challenges of climate change, the nature crisis and inequalities.
- Less than half our students felt they understood the science behind, or the implications of the climate and nature crises.
- Less than half our students felt they had been exposed to perspectives of other cultures or underrepresented groups in their education.
- One third of students felt they had learned about the impacts and influence of colonialism and other historical processes on the current crises.

Key Findings

Year-on-year Progress: Our findings remain consistent with previous years despite a decrease in response rates.

Skills development: There remains a gap between what the students feel they currently receive and what they would like to receive in relation to sustainability education and the development of related skills. This is particularly evident for soft and affective skills. The current curriculum mapping and review processes will enable a full picture of this to be established, and determine whether there is a need for further integration in the curriculum and/or support for students to recognise and articulate these skills when they are developed.

Future Aspirations: Sustainable development, climate change and inequality and the way they are taught continue to be areas which are in high demand from our students, both UG and PG, and across all four faculties and disciplines. Many students indicated that ethical and sustainability considerations now form the basis of their assessments of future opportunities and highlighted prioritizing organizations and jobs that positively contribute to that.

Communication of actions and progress: Across the board students indicated a desire to be part of an institution which prioritises sustainability, and to receive training in this themselves. However, given the qualitative responses and recommendations on actions the University should take, there is a clear gap between what the University is already doing, and awareness of these actions within the student population. The University should highlight these areas of work across student prospectus, open days, and our communications to ensure there is a broader awareness of our progress and actions in this space.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 University of Strathclyde and Sustainable Development

The University of Strathclyde is a leading international technological University which is socially progressive. Our [Vision 2025](#) and newly launched [Strathclyde 2030](#) Strategic Plans put sustainability at the heart of our institutional goals, and underpin the University’s commitment to support attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across all areas of activity, including research, teaching, and operational matters.

The voice of our students is integral to understand their priorities, their current experiences and their ambitions as the future workforce in relation to sustainability. A key way to achieve this is through the annual SOS-UK Sustainability Skills Survey.

THE PLACE OF USEFUL LEARNING

A leading international technological university, inspired by its founding mission, that is socially progressive and makes a positive difference to the lives of its students, to society and to the world

OUR VISION

STRATHCLYDE 2030

OUR MISSION

From our foundation as the place of useful learning, we take it as our responsibility to research, teach and be of benefit to society – to reach outside the University to make the world better-educated, sustainable, prosperous, healthy, fair and secure.

STRATHCLYDE 2030

University of Strathclyde Glasgow

The graphic features large, stylized numbers 2, 0, 3, and 0. The '2' is a collage of city buildings, the '0' is a woman in a lab coat, the '3' is a modern building, and the final '0' is a man in a blue shirt working on a laptop.

KPI 15 – Sustainable Development

All education programmes have programme level learning outcomes related to education for sustainable development by 2027 which encompass the integration of the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development skills and competencies, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and appropriate pedagogical methods.

Increase our research related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) year-on-year

KPI 16 – Carbon Emissions

80% reduction from 2018/19 baseline for Scope 1, 2 and Scope 3 (where this is quantifiable) by 2030, with the remainder of Scope 3 and 4 to be routinely reviewed and played in as appropriate over the planning period, achieving Net Zero by 2040 at the latest

Strategic Framework Alliance

The Student Executive and University Executive Team recognise that their strong engagement and shared values are vital to ensuring the University of Strathclyde continues to provide a world-class student experience.

For three years the sabbatical officers of Strath Union and the Principal and his Executive Team have worked together to create a Strategic Alliance agreement which, states their shared intention of working in partnership and identified opportunities for collaborative work to achieve impact and value for our student body.

A key theme and deliverable for the SAF is Sustainability, with a specific focus on ethical investment and education for sustainable development.

The image shows a woman in a white lab coat and a man in a suit sitting at a table, signing documents. The background is a wood-paneled wall.

1.2 SOS-UK Sustainability Skills Survey

[Students Organizing for Sustainability UK](#) (SOS-UK) is an education charity that aims to help institutions respond to the climate emergency. They do this through change and accreditation programmes, as well through surveys to track progress. To this end, the Students' Sustainability Skills Survey aims to track student experiences and expectations around teaching and learning for sustainability and, crucially, to help institutions understand their students' needs and expectations in relation to sustainability skills development in their curricula. The University of Strathclyde participated in this national survey for the third time this year with over 1800 responses over the three-year period capturing our Strathclyde students' voices and perspectives on Sustainability at Strathclyde. Supported by the Centre for Sustainable Development (CfSD), Sustainable Strathclyde (SS) and Strathclyde Students' Union (SU), we are delighted to have continuing support in this national survey. However we do note the limitations of this survey in that although it focusses on sustainability topics, ways of learning and employability skills, these do not map directly to the UNESCO skills and competencies highlighted in [UNESCO](#) and [Advance HE](#) guidance.

1.3 Data Considerations

This Strathclyde report (published before the National SOS-UK Skills Survey report for the year) draws on comparisons with Strathclyde's data and the SOS-UK Skills Survey UK-wide report of the previous years. The cited quotations are only representative of sampled textual entries students were asked to provide and are neither conclusive nor exhaustive in nature.

Except for demographic related discrete questions and those with specific choices, respondents were asked to respond to questions using a Likert scale. Unless explicitly stated, the graphs show the combined percentage of positive answers of 'somewhat agree' and 'strongly agree', or 'somewhat important' and 'very important', or '4' and '5' combined from a 1-5 ascending scale.

The data can be accessed [here](#) and full data set is available upon request.

1.4 Respondents

This year saw 281 students participate in the survey from the University, which remains significant and representative despite a decrease in number of participants from previous years.

Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (PG) breakdown (Figure 1.1):

Strathclyde had an even representation with 49% UG and 48% PG respondents in 2024/25. PG is comprised of 28% Masters' and 20% PhD. The distribution of respondents varies from the overall University of Strathclyde student population makeup (2024/25: PhD=7%; Masters=29%; Undergraduate=64%) while providing a range of perspectives. However it should be born in mind that with at least one fifth of respondents being in self-led research studies (PhD/MPhil) this may have affected responses related to teaching and learning content they have received at the institution. It should be noted that 2023/24 SOS UK survey data is based on 65% UG and 34% PG responses. It should also be recognised that the increased response rate from postgraduate students may be reflective of the enhanced interest in this area.

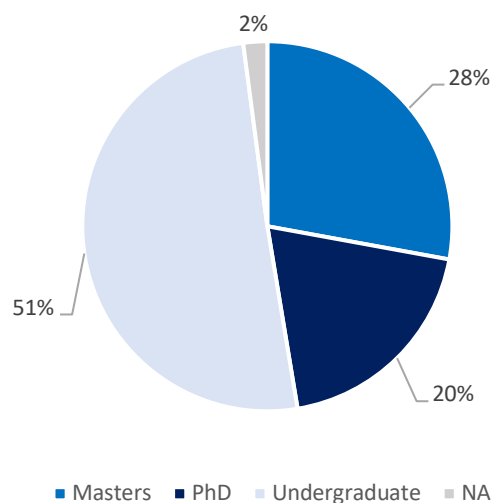


Figure 1.1: Participants' Study Level

Undergraduate Academic Year of study (Figure 1.2):

Strathclyde 2024/25 data showed an even distribution of UG responses from 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year of their studies (22-27%) which is consistent with previous years. It should be noted that 2023/24 UK-wide respondents were concentrated in years 1-3 which reflects the variation in three-year (England and Wales) and four year (Scotland) programmes.

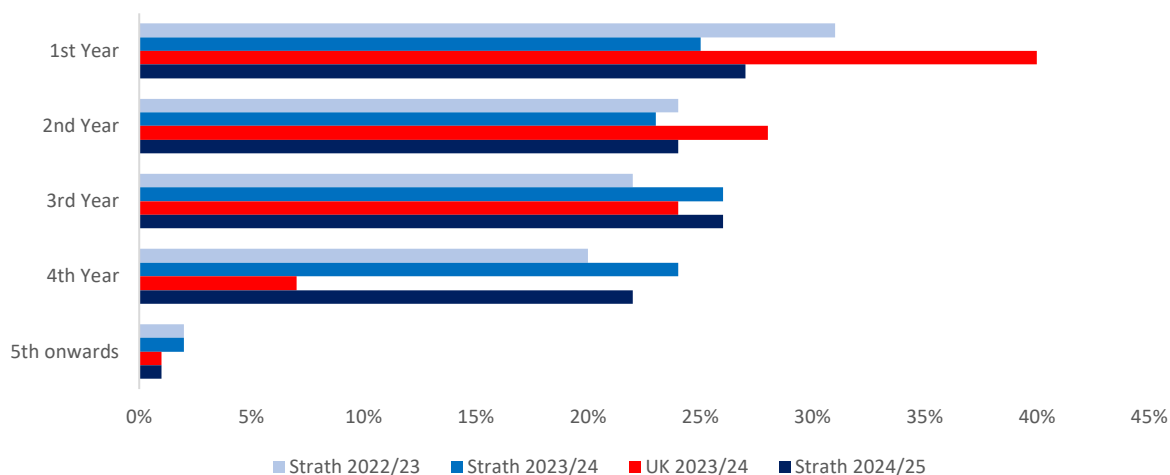


Figure 1.2: Undergraduate (UG) Participants' Year of Study

Faculty (Figure 1.3): This year, there remained a reasonably even distribution of responses across all four faculties with the Strathclyde Business School (SBS) having the lowest response rate. When compared to our internal student population records, the survey sample's distribution was fairly consistent with the University wide make up. The multiple choices included an 'Other' option which cannot be assumed to fall under any faculty.

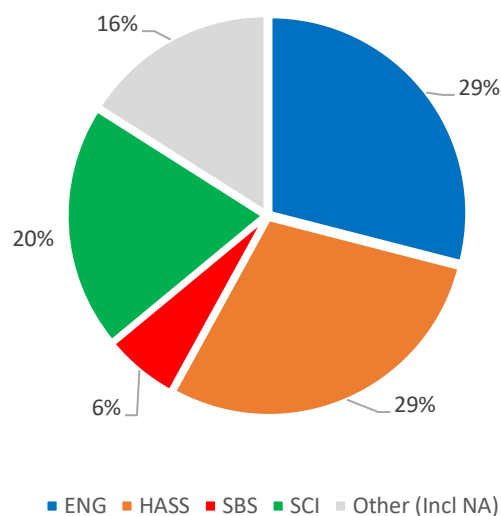


Figure 1.3: Participants' Home Faculty

Gender and student origin (Figure 1.4): Gender split for respondents remained consistent this year with Strathclyde and UK-wide survey data: female (Strathclyde = 58%; UK wide = 62%), male (Strathclyde = 32%; UK wide = 32%), and other (Strathclyde = 6%; UK wide = 9%). Similarly, students' origins remained consistent with UK students the highest (Strathclyde = 66%; UK wide = 64%), International within the EU (Strathclyde = 9%, UK = 7%), and International-outside of the EU (Strathclyde = 19%, UK wide = 26%). The majority of Strathclyde's international students from within and outside the EU were in postgraduate (PG) studies (73%) compared to only 33% PG from within the UK in 2024/25.

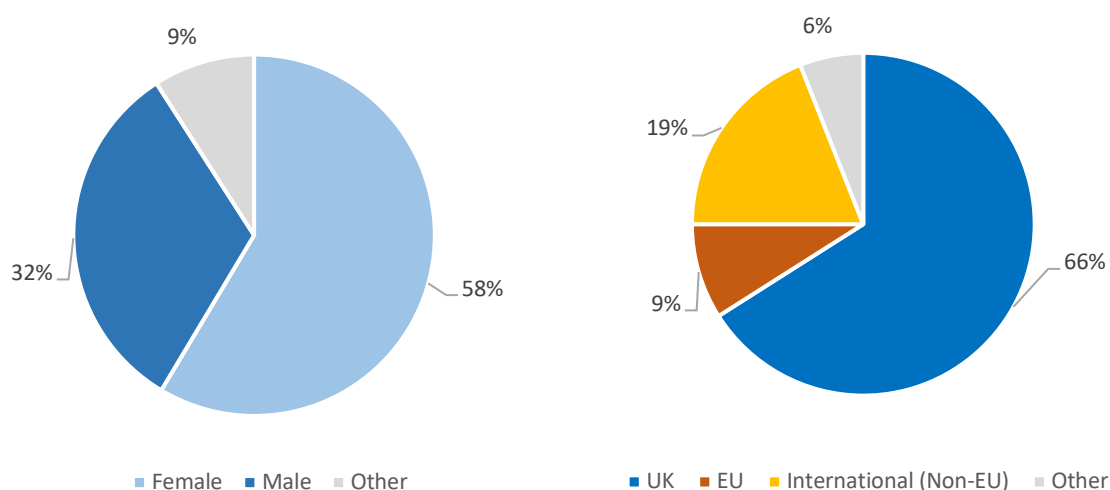


Figure 1.4: Participants' Gender and Origin Distribution

2.0 Place of Study & Sustainability

2.1 Factors Affecting Choice of Place of Study

Respondents were asked to indicate how important a range of factors may have been in influencing their choice in place of study. With the exception of newly introduced questions in 2024/25, Strathclyde responses closely aligned with the national responses from previous years (Figure 2.1). Employment prospects, course reputation, reputation of University and teaching methods featured prominently in students' choice of place of study. Over 70% of students indicated the University's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) as well as student welfare commitments were important to them. The institution's commitment to global development and environmental issues remained important to around half of the respondents overall (49% environmental issues; 53% global development issues). Evidence from UK wide data shows that prospective students are placing more and more importance on global development and environmental issues in their choice of place to study. When asked whether their 'place of study provides opportunities for [them] to get involved in taking action to help limit the negative impact it has on the environment and society', 60% of students responded positively. **It is therefore integral that Strathclyde continues to emphasise the importance of sustainability for the institution. This could include highlighting key actions for our net zero pathway, the impact of our research, our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, and mainstreaming Education for Sustainable Development in the curriculum is emphasised in future prospectus and promotional materials.**

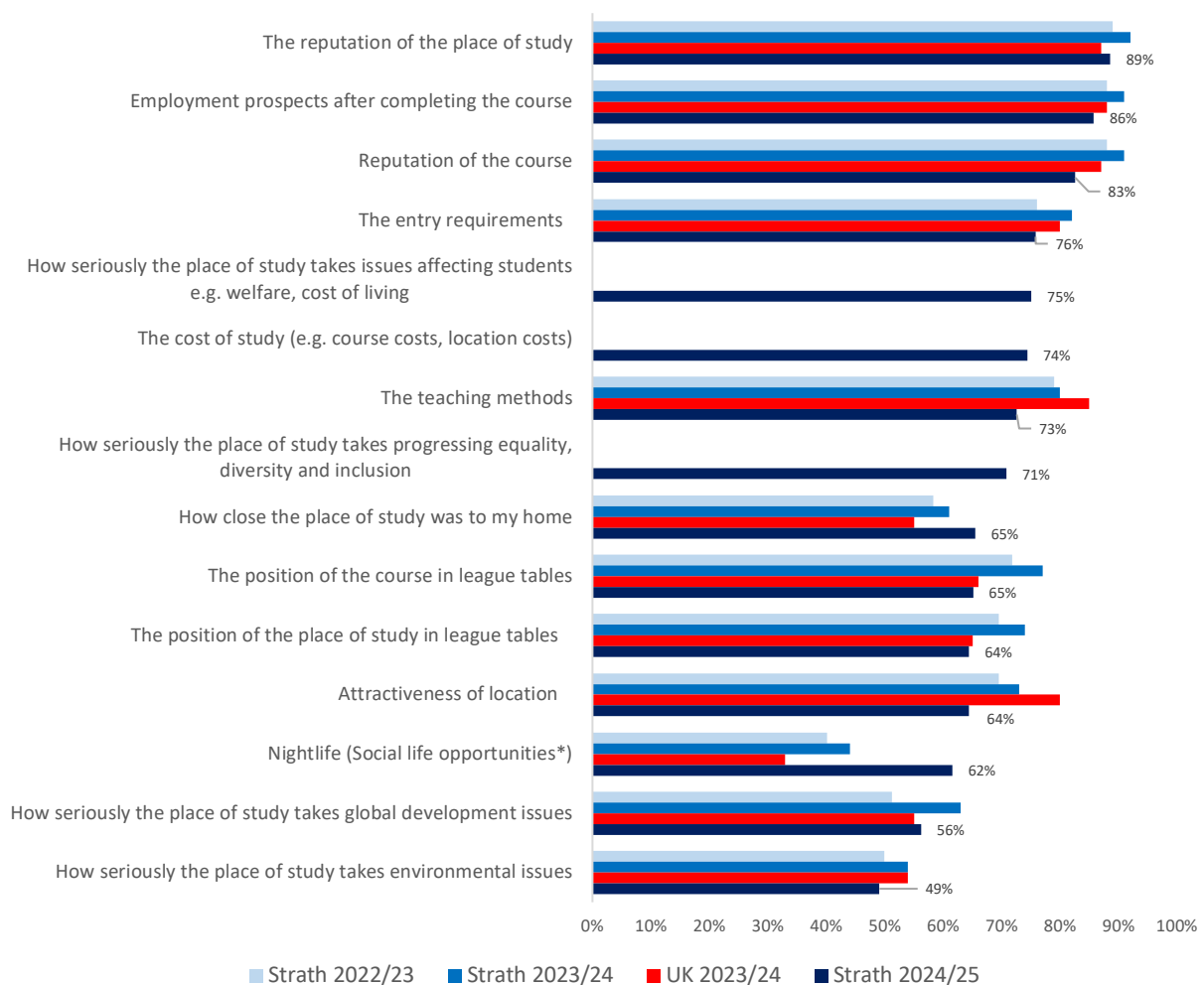


Figure 2.1: Participants' Reasons for Choosing to Study at Strathclyde Against UK-wide Responses

3.0 Sustainable Development at Strathclyde

Students were asked whether sustainable development (topics) should be incorporated into their education at Strathclyde (Figure 3.1). Despite the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis, global conflict, and political instability being felt by students, the findings remained consistent with previous year 85% of students indicated the importance of ‘active incorporation’ of sustainable development across the institution, with 77% indicating a desire to see ‘active incorporation’ in all courses offered. Nevertheless, this drops to just over half students indicating that sustainable development is something they would like to learn more about. Perhaps indicative of content already covered in their programmes to date.

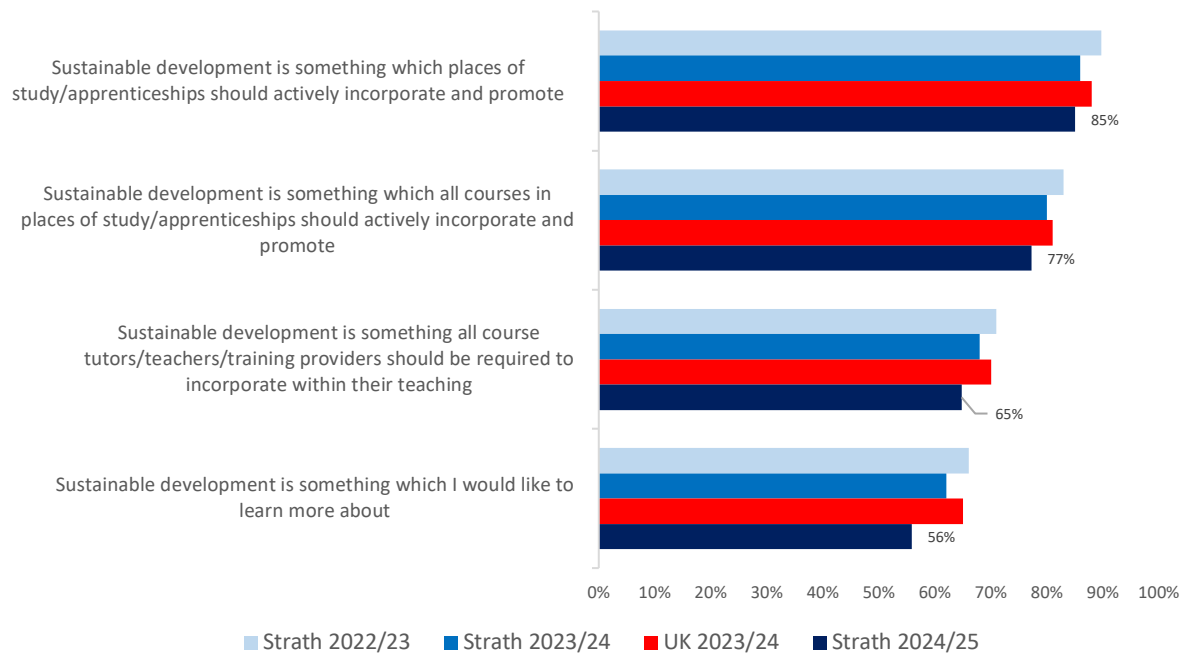


Figure 3.1: Proportion of Students that Agreed Sustainable Development Should be Incorporated into their University Education

When students (56%) were asked the reasons why they wanted to learn more about sustainable development, their responses fell under a number of themes: concern about the future, environmental and broader societal concerns, professional and/or academic aspirations, a feeling of personal responsibility, lack of knowledge and desire to learn more, and general interest in sustainability.

Why would you like to learn more about Sustainable Development?

“I want to learn more about sustainable development because I believe it’s crucial for creating long-term solutions that balance environmental protection with human progress. I hope to contribute to practical solutions for challenges like resource management, renewable energy adoption, and sustainable urban planning.” PhD in SBS ”

“I think it’s important for everyone to stay up to date on the current climate surrounding sustainable development and hold companies and people in power responsible for their actions if they aren’t acting in a sustainable effort.” PGT in Science ”

“I want to understand how we can meet our needs today without harming the environment or taking away from future generations. I also want to learn how we can make sure that **everyone has a chance to live a good life, no matter where they live.**” PGT (Faculty not indicated) ”

“I am studying economics and policy of energy and climate change, I want to learn more about environmental economics, environmental justice and how to apply it in cities” PGT in SBS ”

“I would like to know how to move further in my career without limiting future opportunities for the next generation. How to successfully but morally move forth in regards to the environment and socialisation, as I **do want to progress but I don't want anyone else to be disadvantaged** because of my success.” UG in HaSS ”

Figure 3.2 highlights that respondents expected their chosen degree programmes to develop their social and environmental skills through the formal curricula (85%) as **a key step in providing a strong foundation from which to support sustainability locally, nationally, and internationally.**

Our mainstreaming Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) ambitions (Strathclyde 2030-KPI 15) will support attainment of these student expectations in terms of knowledge, understanding and the development of critical skills and attributes to tackle complex challenges. 73% of students indicated that the University was taking active steps to reduce any negative impact it has on the environment and society.

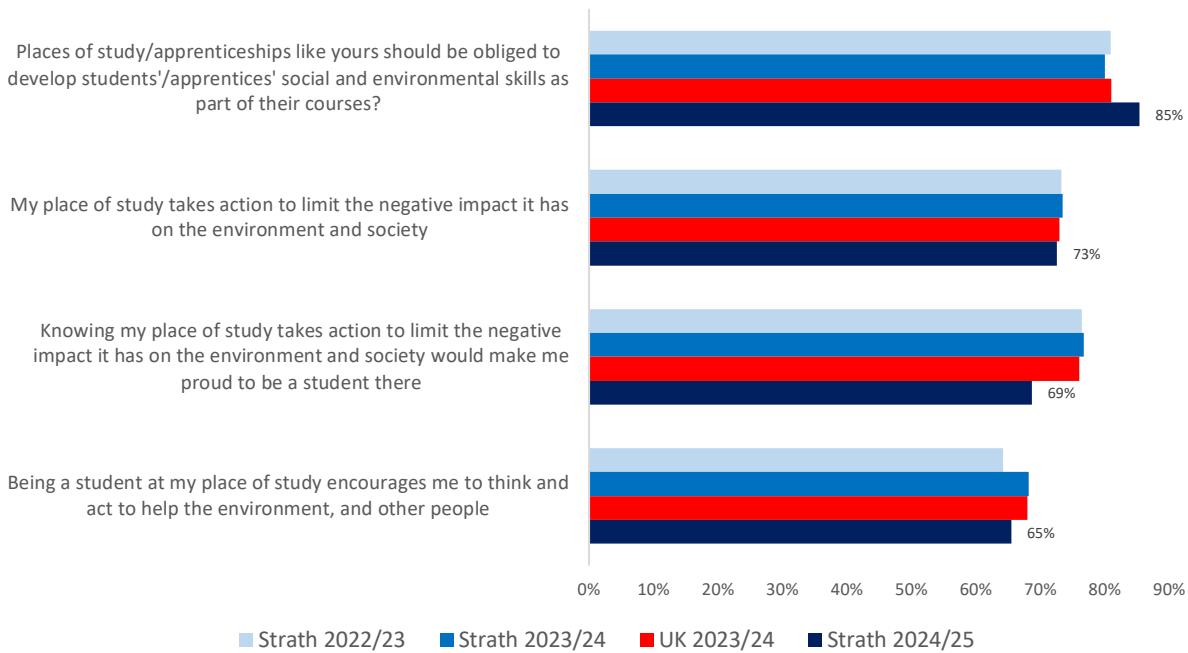


Figure 3.2: Students' Perspectives related to the University Taking Action for Sustainable Development

However, when asked what actions their place of study should take to improve performance related to Sustainable Development, students highlighted the importance of incorporation of not only sustainability into curriculum, but also awareness-raising, waste reduction and recycling, providing extra-curricular opportunities related to sustainability, improving energy use, increasing the number of trees, plants and green spaces on campus, and promoting and supporting more research and innovation related to sustainability.

What actions would you like the University to take to improve its performance on Sustainable Development?

*"Making it an actual **part of our courses** rather than optional extras which it is very hard to feel like you have time to pursue even if you are interested"* UG in Science



*"More **volunteering opportunities** that focus on sustainability"* UG in HaSS



"I would like to see my place of study prioritize sustainable development by enhancing campus energy efficiency, expanding recycling programs, and promoting renewable energy use. Incorporating sustainability into the curriculum across disciplines would also ensure all students gain relevant knowledge. Additionally, encouraging sustainable transportation options, like biking and public transit, and supporting research focused on sustainability solutions can help create a greener campus environment." UG in SBS



*"I would suggest my place of study implement more **renewable energy sources**, **enhance recycling programs**, **incorporate sustainability into the curriculum across disciplines**, and promote sustainable practices on campus, such as reducing single-use plastics and encouraging green transportation options."* PGT in Engineering



*"More **collaboration with the industry and other universities** on topics as such. Our university already has an established collaboration with uni's in Malawi and fruitful collaboration as such yield well-equipped leaders and researchers of the future that can be at the forefront of sustainable development"* PhD in Science



Some of the issues highlighted are already areas of development and progress within the University. **These actions are also a source of pride and motivation for students. However, there is clearly a need to improve communication of progress in these areas to the student body more effectively for broader awareness and participation going forward.**

When asked about their specific engagement with their Students' Union (SU) (Figure 3.3), students indicated an expectation for SU to 'actively incorporate' Sustainable Development in everything it does (83%). However, similar to the rest of the UK, only 67% felt that the SU was currently taking action to limit the negative impact.

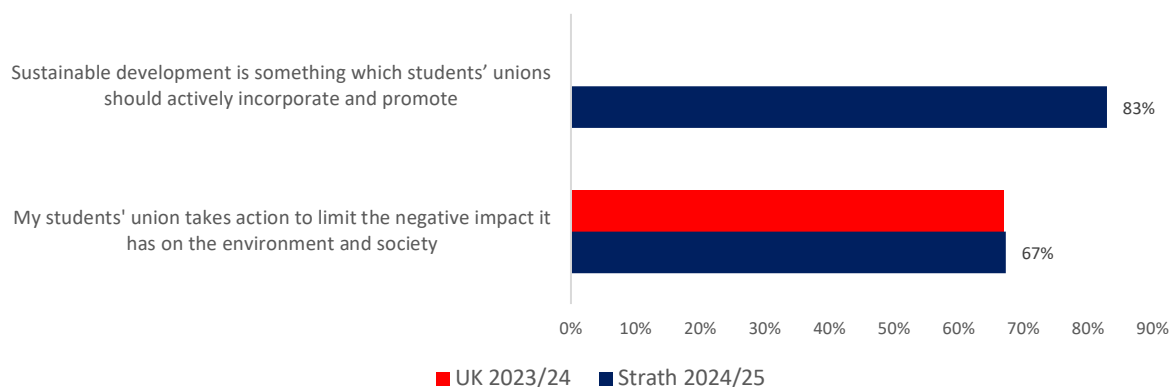


Figure 3.3 Students' Perspectives related to Student Union Action for Sustainable Development

4.0 Education for Sustainable Development

The [Strathclyde 2030 Strategy](#) has committed that: “All education programmes have programme level learning outcomes related to education for sustainable development by 2027 which encompass the integration of the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development skills and competencies, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and appropriate pedagogical methods”. This ambition seeks to develop and enhance the ‘sustainability literacy’ and employability competencies of students at Strathclyde. In this academic year, departments and programme leads are focussed on mapping the current curriculum to understand where these areas are already covered, and where there are opportunities for improved integration in the future. The skills survey explored to what extent sustainability is present in current curricula through a series of questions related to topics about, and ways of learning for sustainable development. It is important to note that the survey does not capture whether students believe they have developed the skills and competencies associated with education for sustainable development.

4.1 Learning *About* Sustainability

Students were asked to indicate if they had learned about specific topic areas related to sustainable development in their University education to date (Figure 4.1). It should be noted that responses in some areas are affected by the disciplinary areas of study, although respondents from across all years of study appear have been exposed to the majority of these topical issues (Appendix-A3). Drops in corporate social responsibility, consumerism and trade may be reflective of the low response rate from the Business School where these areas are primarily focussed.

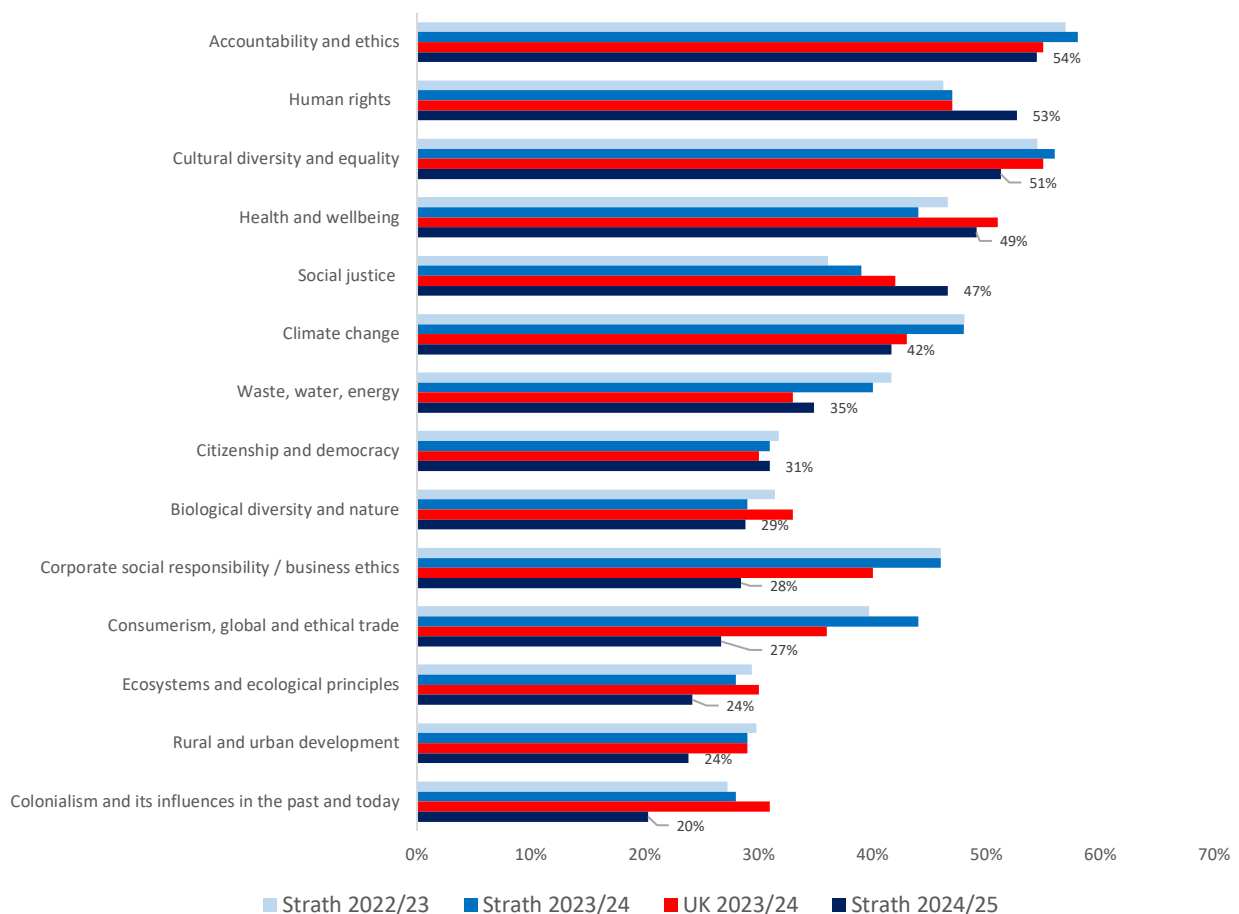


Figure 4.1: Proportion of Students Who Agreed to Have Experienced Learning About Subjects Related to Sustainable Development at University Level

4.2 Ways of Learning for Sustainable Development

In 2024/25, Strathclyde respondents had been exposed to a range of learning mechanisms for achieving Sustainable Development (Figure 4.2); the most common amongst them being collaborative learning (76%), case studies (70%), and problem-based learning (68%).

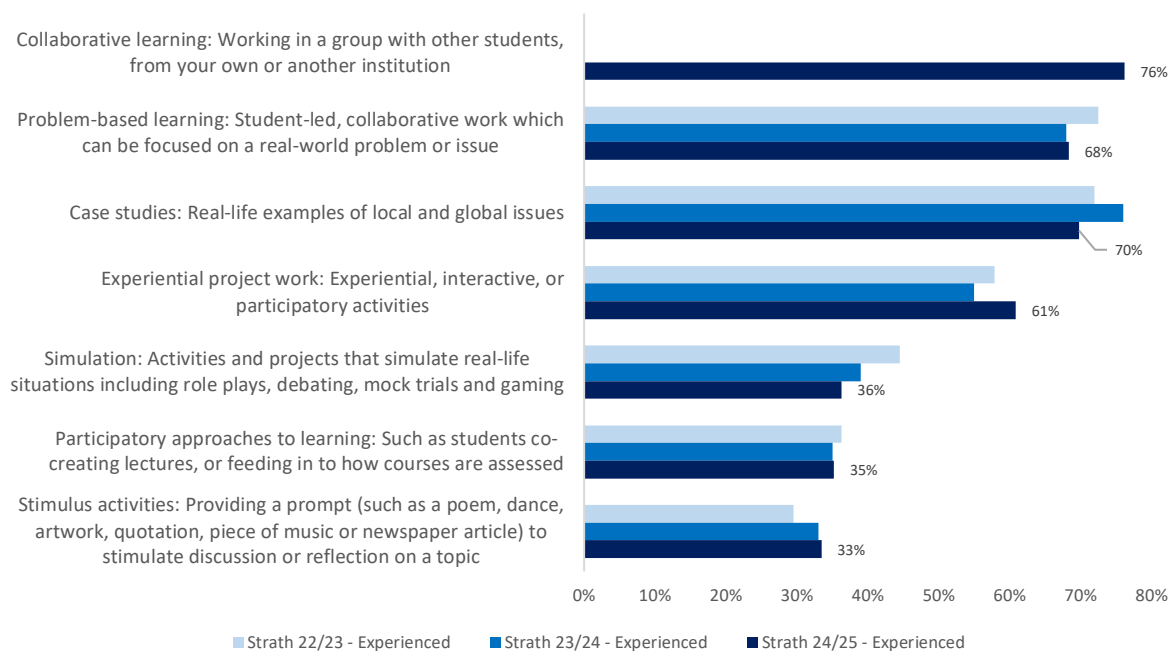


Figure 4.2: Percentage of students who have experienced ways of learning during their current course

In all cases the use of these interactive methods of teaching and learning to bring sustainable development challenges to life were seen to be beneficial by students (Figure 4.3). In both cases Strathclyde responses were broadly consistent with previous years, and other UK institutions, and consistent between teaching methods experienced and their perceived level of benefit (Figure 4.4).

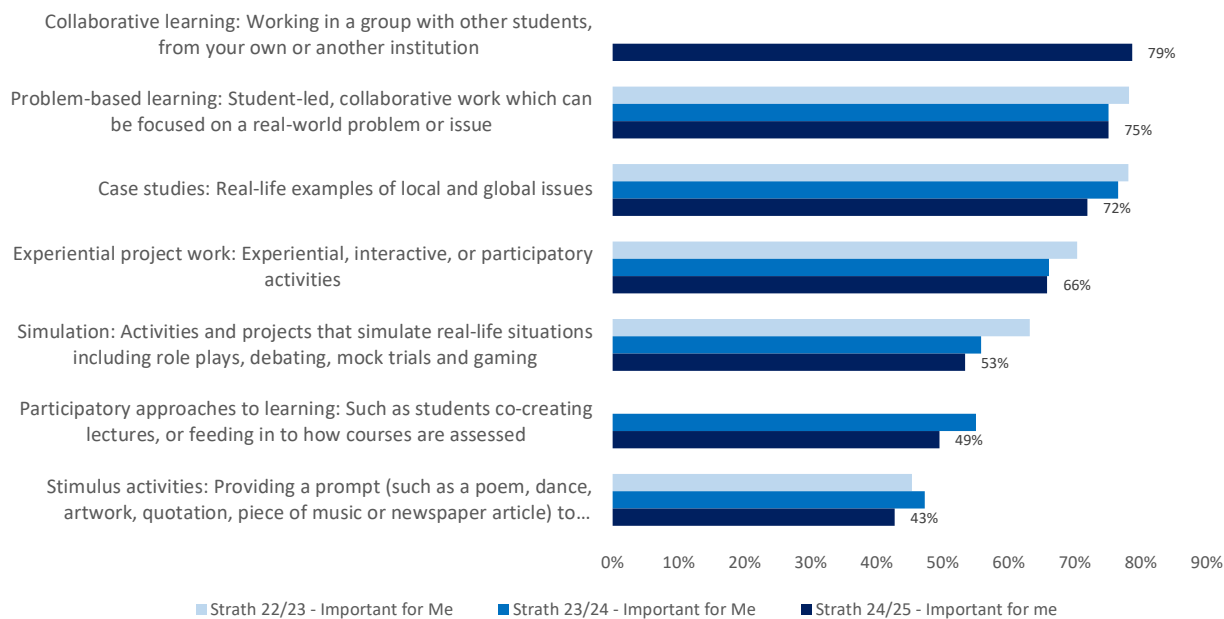


Figure 4.3: Percentage of students who have found each of the ways of learning beneficial for developing their skills and understanding

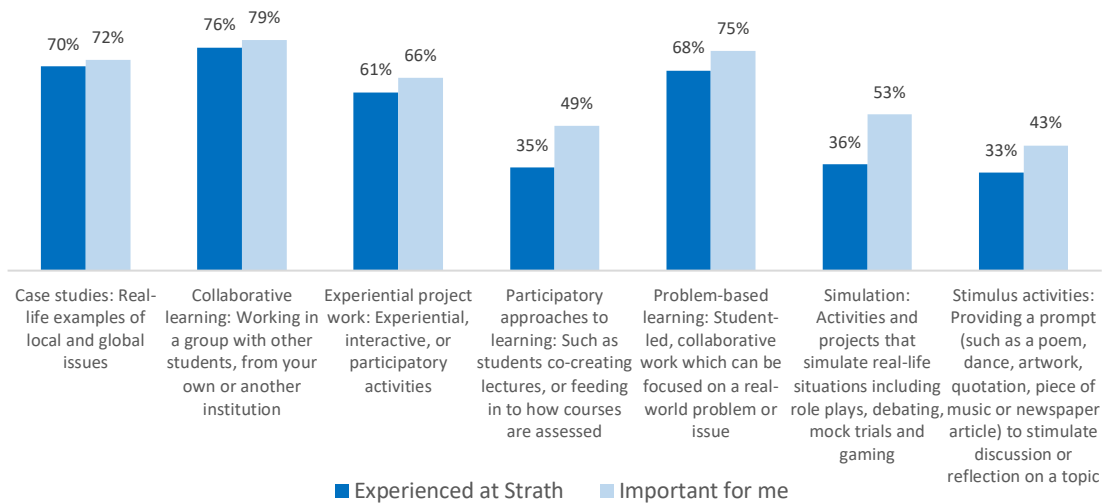


Figure 4.4: Comparison Between the ways of learning students have experienced versus those their believe will be beneficial to their skills building

4.3 Understanding Climate Change and Nature Crisis

In an update to the previous survey, this year respondents were asked key questions related to their exposure, understanding and ability to tackle key sustainability challenges: climate change, nature crisis, and inequality. As outlined in Figure 4.5, less than half of respondents stated that they understood what climate change, or the nature crisis were and the science behind them. Within this, not surprisingly, students indicated a higher level of understanding for Climate Change than Nature Crisis, which could also reflect the great emphasis on climate change in the media. Understanding of actions to be taken at local and global levels were slightly higher for both issues. However, how these crises affect future employment or specific population groups was very low. Understanding the science behind climate change and the nature crisis is integral if we are developing robust and appropriate solutions. **This disparity between understanding the climate science, to the actual actions and implications for our lives and careers is one which needs to be addressed through both curricula and extra curricula activities. This is crucial for ensuring that our graduates have the skills and knowledge to take the urgent actions needed to address these global challenges.**

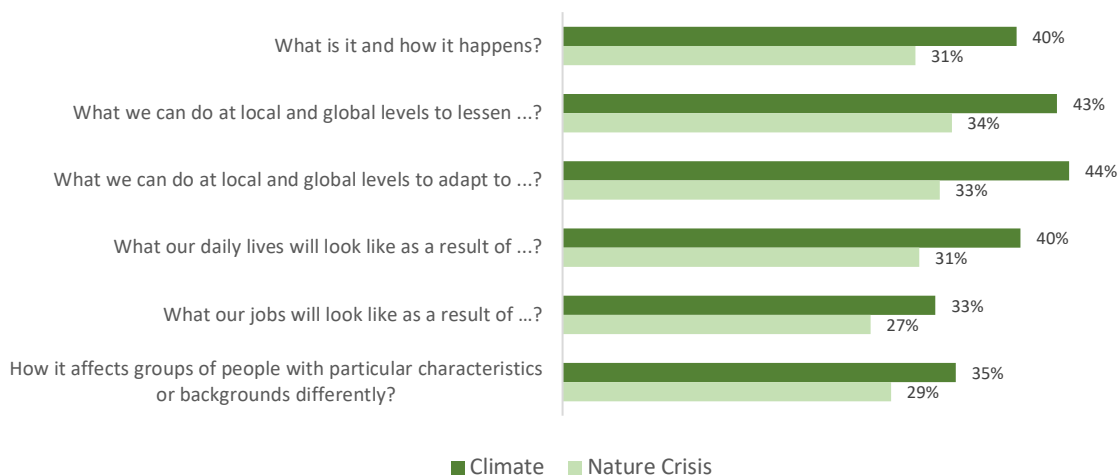


Figure 4.5: Proportion of Students Who Agreed to Have Experienced Learning Related to Climate Change and Nature Crisis (Strath 2024-25)

4.4 Understanding the Role of Inequality and Colonialism

The survey explored the respondents' experiences of learning about inequality and colonialism. Strathclyde's 2024/25 results (Figure 4.6) indicated that half of our students had been exposed to perspectives from cultures around the world (50%), and underrepresented groups in our society (48%). When looking more specifically at issues of decolonisation respondents appeared poorly informed of perspectives from cultures which had been historically exploited (42%). Similarly, around one third of students were aware of how colonialism had impacted the way in which the curriculum is framed (35%) or the links between colonial systems and current global challenges such as climate change (36%). The University has undertaken important work aiming to support Decolonizing the Curriculum (DtC) work across multiple faculties and the Union. For example, the Strathclyde [Decolonial Academy](#) is a collaborative space for re/learning about decoloniality. It was created in collaboration between HaSS and the Union and delivered a series workshops over two semesters in 2024/25 academic year. Moving forward, the University's Diversity and Equality office is leading on creating a DtC community of practice with the aim of bringing colleagues across disciplines and faculties and providing guidance to those who would like to explore decolonial lenses to their current work. **This work aims to effectively reflect on our ways of learning, content, and unconscious bias. It is imperative that more emphasis is placed on recognising, challenging, and addressing the influences of historical colonialism in our formal and informal curricula at Strathclyde.**



Figure 4.6: Proportion of Students Who Agreed to Have Experienced Learning Related to Inequality, Decolonization and Cultures from Around the World

4.5 Preparedness to Meet the Challenges of Sustainability

Our students were asked whether they felt confident that their educational experiences at Strathclyde prepared them to meet the complex challenges of sustainability in the future (Figure 4.7). The responses remained consistently low across the three issues, with confident responses standing at only 20% for climate change, 14% for Nature Crisis, and 22% for decolonization and inequality. However, given the complexity of these topics, it is understandable that our students' may feel overwhelmed and therefore it's important to highlight the positive responses of 'somewhat' and 'little'. When combining all positive response, of varying levels of confidence, a promising figure of around 70% of students feel positively about being prepared to some extent meet the challenges of Climate Change, Nature Crisis, and Inequality. **These findings emphasise the importance of our approach to mainstreaming ESD to address these critical issues, and the skills needed to tackle them, in our curricula. These will equip our graduates to deal with pressing challenges of the world.**

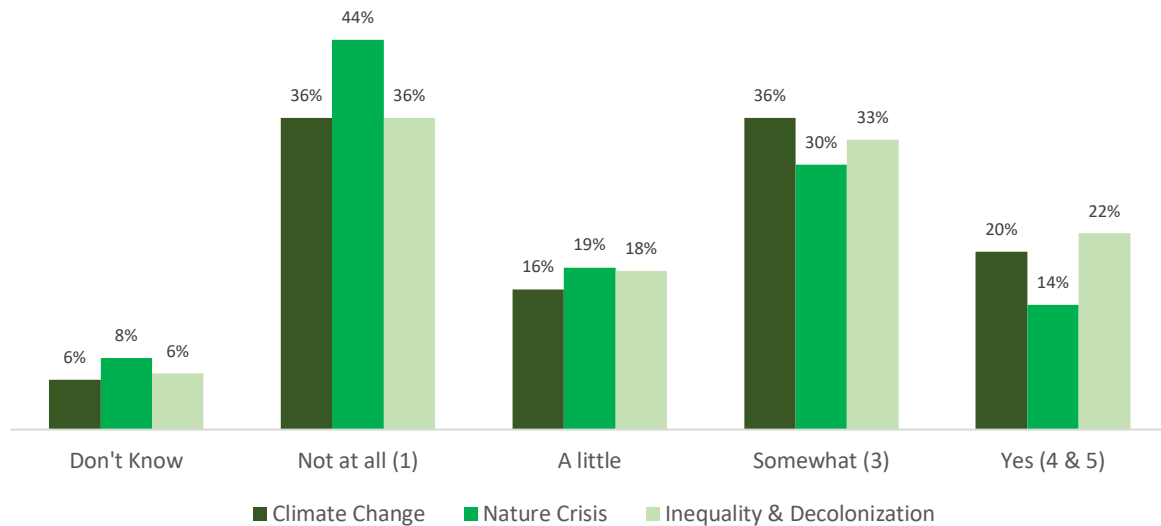


Figure 4.7: Students' Perspectives on Whether They Feel Their Education at Strathclyde Prepared them to Meet the Challenges Relating to... (Strath 2024/25)

Students were asked what impact, if any, has learning about any of the issues had on them 'personally'. Thematically, their responses included: change of values, views or outlook on life, improved understanding of issues and impacts, prompted more personal action related to sustainability, influenced future career or study aspirations, more awareness of the lack of coverage in education and triggering the desire to do or learn more. Some examples include:

What impact has learning about Sustainable Development had on you personally?

"Learning about sustainability has significantly influenced both my daily life and my broader values and career goals. On a personal level, I've become more conscious of my consumption choices, striving to reduce waste, choose eco-friendly products, and support sustainable brands. This awareness has led me to adopt habits like minimizing single-use plastics, conserving energy, and prioritizing sustainable food options." PGT in Science

"The focus on Health & Wellbeing, Human Rights and Social Justice are all cornerstones for the professional standards for my career." PGT (Faculty not indicated)

"I definitely take more time myself to think about how my actions can help change the future of the planet; I'm more conscious of things like single use plastic and recycling etc" UG in HaSS

"Huge influence on values, career aspirations, and way I design" PGT in Engineering

"Made me reflect on my positionality as a researcher, as the moral obligations associated with my practice in term of thinking about the impact knowledge dissemination will have on the lives of participants (who took part in the research project) in the long term." PhD (Faculty not indicated)

"The issues covered in my teaching so far include accountability and ethics, consumerism, and corporate social responsibility. Learning about these topics has made me more aware of the ethical implications of my actions, both as an individual and as a potential future professional. It has influenced my purchasing decisions, as I now consider the ethical and environmental impact of the products I buy. Additionally, it has shaped my career aspirations, as I am now more interested in working for companies that prioritize ethical business practices and social responsibility." PGT (Faculty not indicated)

5.0 Sustainability Futures: Employment & the Job Market

5.1 What Students are Looking for in Future Employment

Students were asked about what they look for in future employment (Figure 5.1). Over half of student respondents (56%) indicated that sustainable development is something they want their job to actively contribute to. When it comes to their expectations on their future jobs, not surprisingly, a good salary (87%) remained the most popular response in 2024/25. However, this was followed closely with 'a chance to work in a business/organization that makes a difference to social and environmental issues' (75%), which highlights the continuing importance placed by students on these crucial issues.

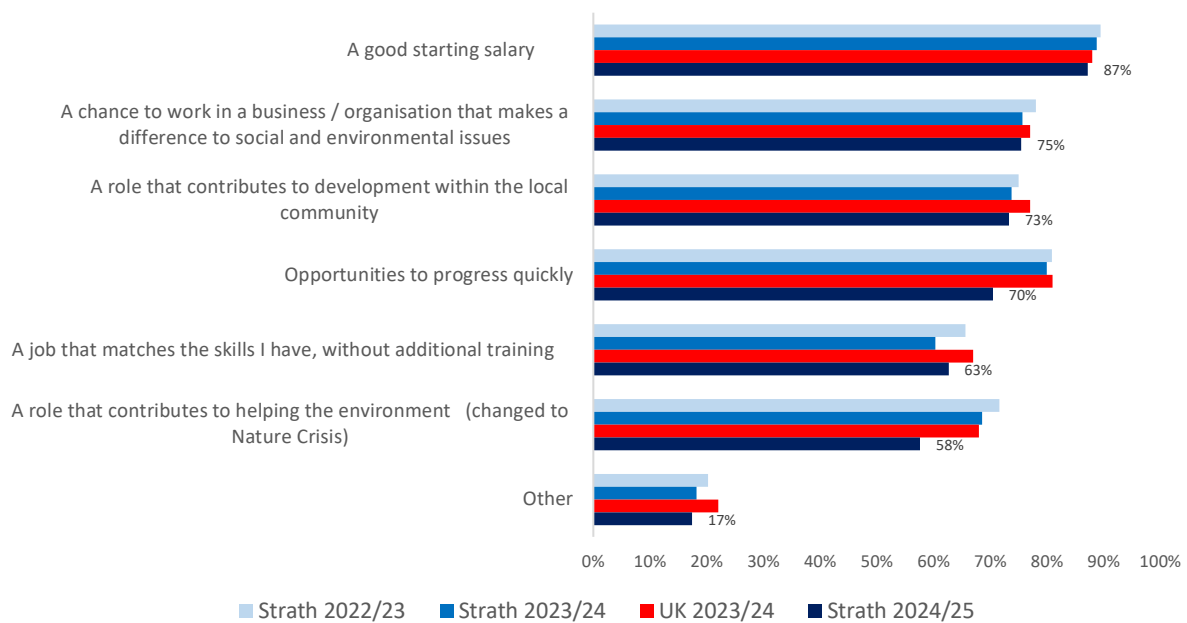


Figure 5.1 Students' Priorities for Their Future Employment

5.2 Skills Perceived as Important for Future Employment

Students compared sustainable development skills they perceive will be required by future employers against those they had been taught (to date) at Strathclyde (Figure 5.2). In terms of importance, student respondents felt the most important skills for employers were the ability to set clear goals and create plans to achieve them (86%), asking questions and careful analysis (85%), synthesising different types of knowledge (85%), collaboration and communication skills (84%), self-awareness of thoughts and feelings (84%), and an ability to appreciate diversity and cultural awareness (80%).

When comparing perceived desirable skills and competencies with those developed at University to date (Figure 5.2) it was clear that cognitive and action orientated skills such as critical and systems thinking alongside problem solving were recognised by students in their curricula. However softer affective skills associated with empathy, values and emotional intelligence were less clearly apparent to students. **Curriculum mapping will enable the University to see more clearly where these skills are being developed in graduates throughout their programmes in due course. It must be considered that these softer skills are being included in curricula but are perhaps less visible to students and should be clearly articulated in learning outcomes and attribute development.**

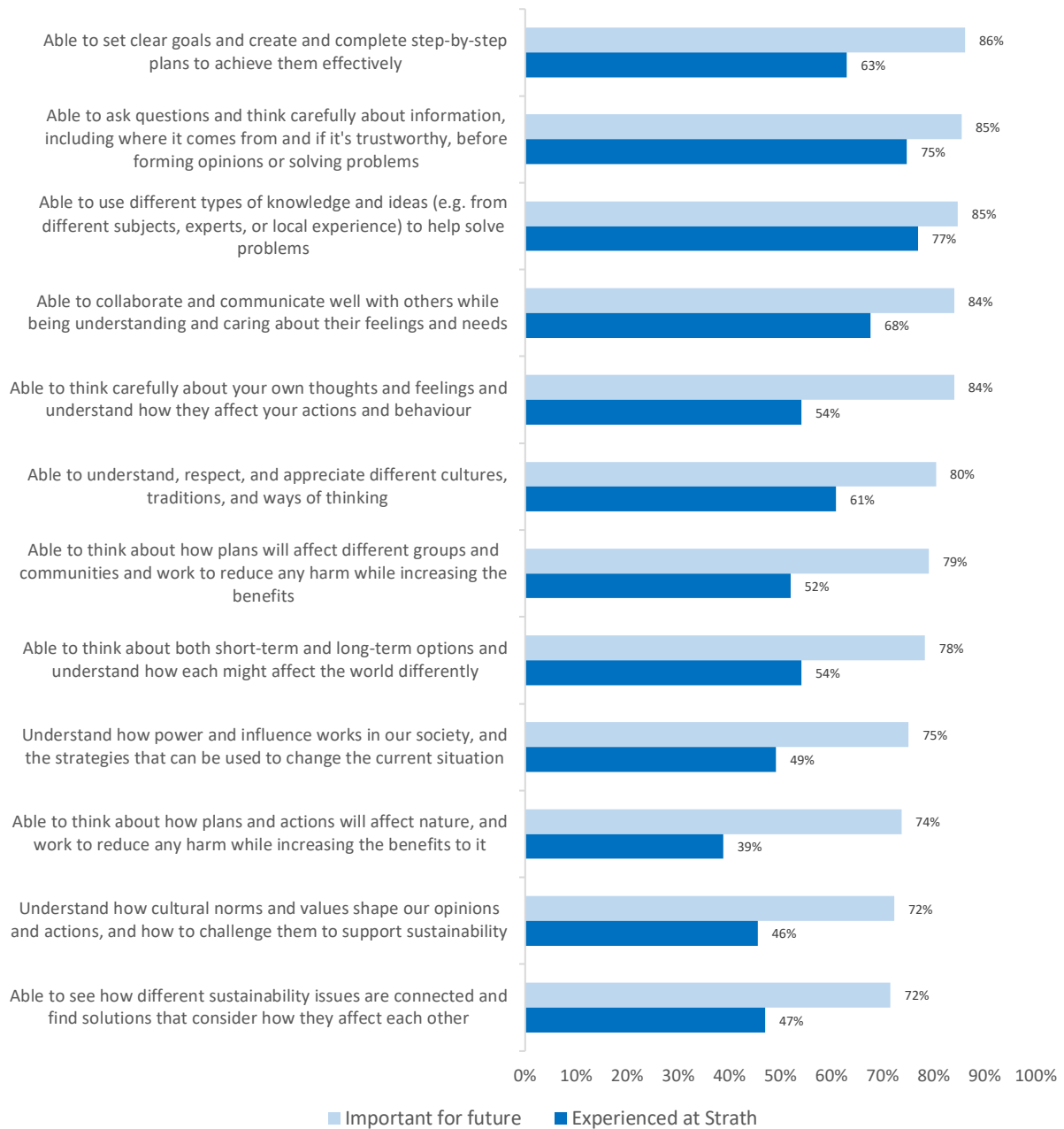


Figure 5.2: Students' Perceptions on Sustainability Skills They Agree to have Experienced at Strathclyde Against What They Perceive as Important for their Future Employment (Strath 2024/25)

5.3 Meeting Changes to Future Employment

Respondents were asked to reflect on their confidence to meet the challenges presented by changes to future employment as a result of climate change and the nature crisis (Figure 5.3). Two questions in particular were highlighted: New ways of working – denoting a change in the skills required at work, and New types of jobs – denoting a change in the nature of work. Around half of students indicated they feel positively, with varying degrees of confidence, that their education at Strathclyde is preparing them well to respond to these future challenges.

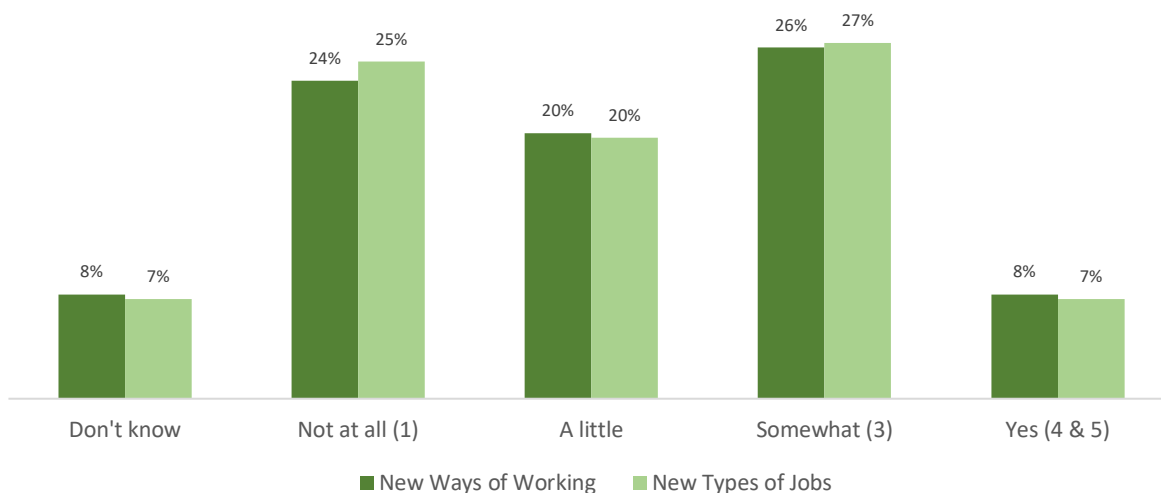


Figure 5.3: Students' Perceptions of their Knowledge of and Preparedness for Future Changes to Employment Due to Climate Change and the Nature Crisis

Students were asked whether they wanted their future jobs to actively contribute to sustainable development, and the reasons why. Thematically responses included: making a positive impact environmentally, helping underprivileged people, helping future generations, educating others, and making a positive impact for society.

What are your aspirations of how your future roles would contribute to Sustainable Development?

*"I am currently studying applied linguistics and intercultural communication. I would love it if I could facilitate conversations about **sustainability across cultures**" PGT in HaSS* ”

*"I would like to work within **sustainability finance**, or auditing in order to ensure businesses are complying with ESG standards" UG in SBS* ”

*"As a psychologist, I aspire to not only understand how environmental stress impacts people's lives, but also to help others understand **how their lives are affected by environmental stressors**." PhD in HaSS* ”

*"I am hoping to become a teacher or at least work in education. I think that my role is going to be important for sustainability as it is **teachers and educators that can have a big influence on students understanding and exposure to sustainability**." PGT in HaSS* ”

*"I want to contribute to **environmental and urban policy**, one of the most interesting areas for me is transport and mobility" PGT in SBS* ”

*"I have and will continue to work in the humanitarian sector and there is a great need to increase the **sustainable way of working even in a sector that focused in emergency response**." PhD in Science* ”

*"I aspire to contribute to sustainable development by driving initiatives that promote environmental responsibility, social equity, and economic resilience. Whether through **policy advocacy, project management, or innovation**, I want to be part of efforts that support clean energy, reduce waste, and enhance social inclusion." PGT in Engineering* ”

5.4 Job Sacrifices for Sustainability

Student respondents were asked about their ethical considerations and priorities in future employment (Figure 5.4). These questions measure to what extent students are willing to make sacrifices to live up to sustainability-related ideals. Given that students have indicated in previous questions that salary expectations are a priority in future employment, students here indicated that they are willing to make salary sacrifices in order to work for the right type of job, and the right type of employer with 70% of students indicating they are happy to sacrifice up to £1000. Results indicate a continuing pressure on employers to demonstrate credentials and values around sustainable development that align with graduates if they are to be successful in attracting them. Salary and career progression are always going to be important, but demonstrable corporate values and global responsibility are also significant factors in attracting talent.

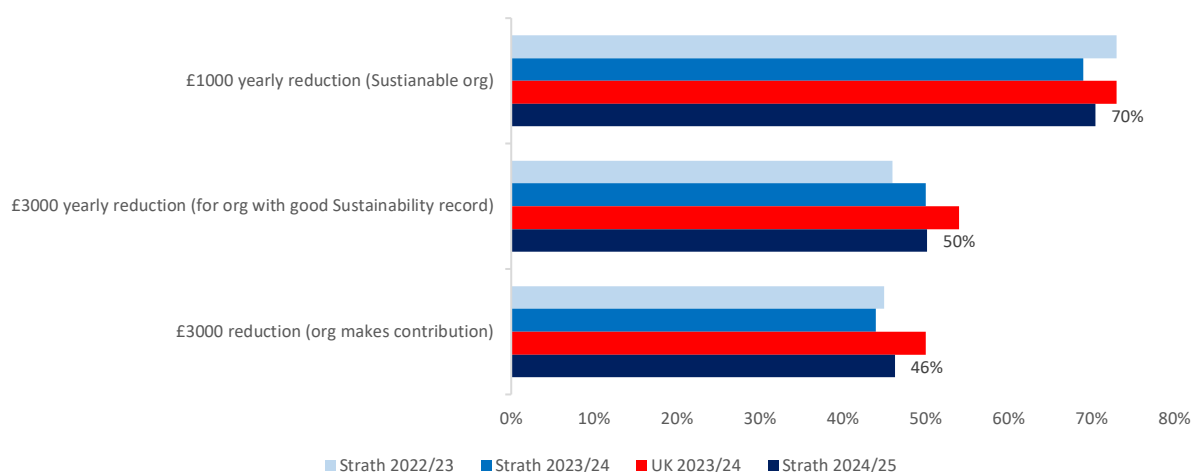


Figure 5.4: Proportion of Students' Prepared to Make Sacrifices in Future Employment Due to Sustainability Considerations

5.5 Identifying and Addressing Gaps

Throughout the questionnaire, respondents were asked about skills' 'coverage' in current courses; 'importance' to students to learn about; and importance for future 'employability' prospects for the same range of areas. When analysing these sets together, the responses show consistency between *the skills the students feel as personally important for them to develop by the end of their studies (i.e. students' perception of key skills for their personal development)* and *students' perception of the skills future employers actively look for in graduates (i.e. students' perception of key skills for employment)*. This is consistent with other sets of questions that indicate that students highly value future employment prospects and expect their place of study and courses to equip them with relevant, useful, and impactful skill sets that position them well for the job market upon graduation.

However, there appears to be a disconnect or gap between the key skills students want and expect to develop through their studies, especially in relation to sustainability issues, and what they currently feel they get from their studies with respect to the development of these 'relevant, useful, and impactful skill sets'. **A primary objective of mainstreaming Education for Sustainable Development at Strathclyde is to close this gap and so better equip students with these key sustainability and employability skills and competencies which will be critical in their gaining employment and will continue to develop through and throughout their careers.**

6.0 Conclusions and Ongoing Activities

6.1 Key Findings

Year-on-year progress

Due to decrease in response rates, our Strathclyde results for the year 2024/25 fluctuated more than previously. The **data however remained consistent with findings from previous years**. Additionally, this year we found that qualitative data, possibly due to the current politically charged environment, had a positive increase in quality whereby students took more time to write detailed responses to express their increasing interest and dedication to sustainable development, equality, and making the world a better place. Only a small portion of these responses are captured in this report.

Developing and articulating skills and attributes

From the student perspective there remains a gap between what they perceive they currently receive, and what they would like to receive in relation to sustainability education and the development of related skills, which should be more effectively measured and monitored as ESD is mainstreamed. **This seemed particularly clear in relation to soft and affective skills**. This should present us with further incentive to incorporate and embed sustainability into our engagements with students whether it be through teaching and learning, research, or extra-curricular activities. It may also reflect the need to **support students in identifying, reflecting on, and articulating the skills and competencies they are developing throughout their study period**. Many students indicated that **ethical and sustainability considerations now form the basis of their assessments of future opportunities and highlighted prioritizing organizations and jobs that positively contribute to that**.

6.2 Ongoing Actions to Support Sustainability Skills

Since the University has taken part in the SOS-UK survey (3 years), we have taken on board the findings and feedback from respondents to help inform our activities and engagements with the student body in the formal and informal curricula, and in student support services. This includes not only our ambitions in sustainability related activities, but also our efforts across decolonising the curriculum and ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion across our institution.

ESD Mainstreaming & Action Plans

Since publishing our first findings of the SOS-UK skills survey in 2022/23, the University has made significant progress towards the commitment to mainstreaming sustainable development skills and competencies across our curricula. To achieve our new Strathclyde 2030 Strategic Plan targets and KPIs, the development and implementation of ESD will be led by faculty and departmental level action plans making ESD integral components of what our educational programmes are delivering. At Strathclyde we are working closely with colleagues across the University to ensure that ESD is also aligned with areas of entrepreneurship and equality, diversity and inclusion in our curricula, emphasising to all that these areas are reinforcing and complementary. This is reflected in our curriculum mapping exercise currently underway, and through integration of sustainability in wider programmes such as the [Exploring Entrepreneurship Challenge](#).

Decolonising the Curriculum

The University has undertaken important work aiming to support Decolonizing the Curriculum (DtC) work across multiple faculties and Strath Union. For example, the Strathclyde [Decolonial Academy](#) is a collaborative space for re/learning about decoloniality. It was created in collaboration between the faculty of Humanities and Social Science and Strath Union and delivered a series workshops over two

semesters in 2024/25 academic year. Moving forward, the University's Diversity and Equality office is leading on creating a DtC community of practice with the aim of bringing colleagues across disciplines and faculties and providing guidance to those who would like to explore decolonial lenses to their current work. This work aims to effectively reflect on our ways of learning, content, and unconscious bias. It is imperative that more emphasis is placed on recognising, challenging, and addressing the influences of historical colonialism in our formal and informal curricula at Strathclyde.

Extracurricular and engagement opportunities

The Centre for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Strathclyde team continue to offer and extend chances for students to engage in learning opportunities and activities to support and promote sustainability during their time at the University. This includes a range of online and in-person micro-credentials on our Learning for Sustainability Passport (available on MyPlace), engagement and skills building events such as Make and Mend workshops, and partnerships with Strath Union and Hazaar to provide market places to extend the life of household goods and clothing. We also hold a Sustainability at Strathclyde Week every year (since 2022) which includes a student conference to showcase the work of our four faculties in relation to sustainability. In 2025 this will be expanded to a Sustainability Festival which will combine the conference alongside postgraduate competitions, and a fair with careers societies and a market place. We recognise that student time is limited and are working to ensure that our offerings meet the needs and interests of our student body.

Employability & Careers

Student responses over the last three years have shown a clear interest in careers which support and promote sustainable practices. Our [Careers Service](#) support students to understand and identify career opportunities in this space through career fairs and support services to ensure they are able to articulate their skills and opportunities in this space.

Staff Development

We have developed and integrated [training](#) and professional development opportunities for staff to both assess curricula in terms of ESD, and support them to incorporate ESD within courses. Support is ongoing through communities of practice to contextualize sustainable development to all disciplines and focus on developing relevant competencies. We also continue to learn from other institutions working in this space, sharing tools, training and best practice.

Prospective Students

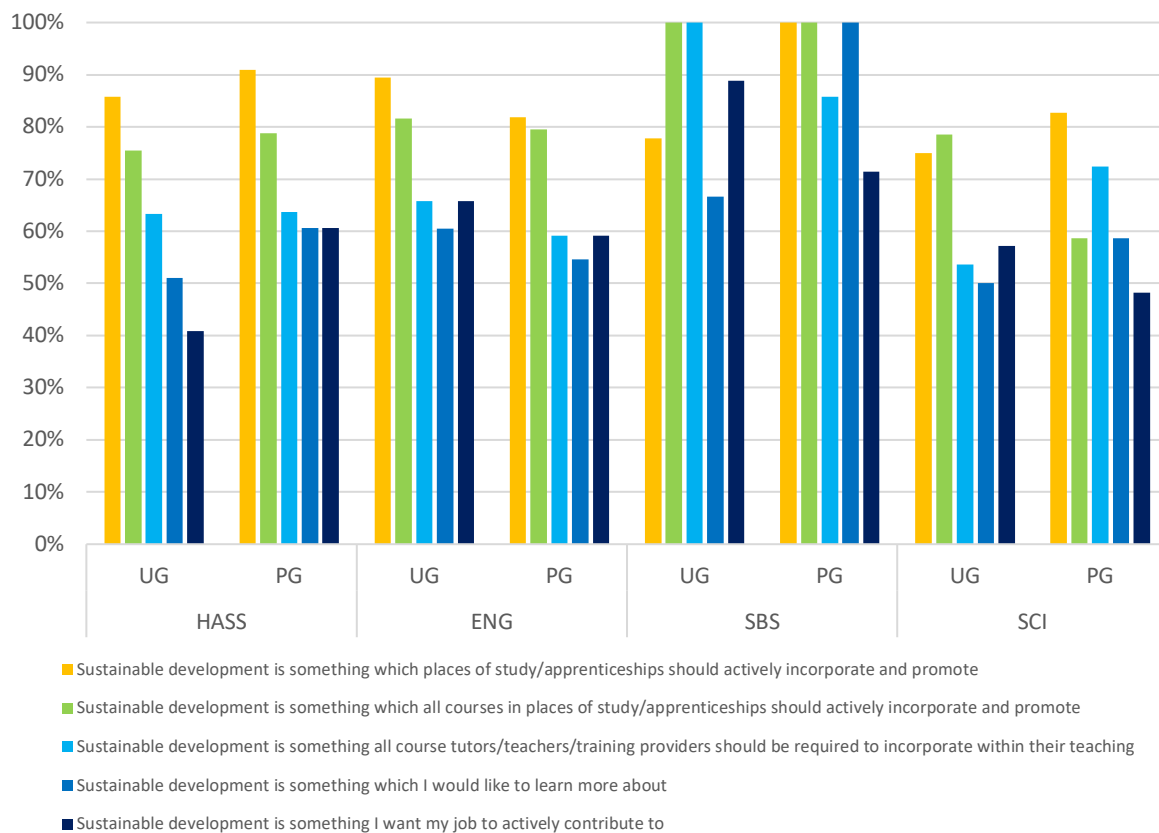
Sustainability is clearly an area which students are looking for to be more prominent throughout their journey from recruitment, in prospectus and marketing material, to induction and course material. This will help students understand the University's commitment to sustainability and how it will help shape their journey within and beyond the walls of the institution. Although embedded in our Strathclyde 2030 Strategy and University plans, efforts need to be made to make this more explicit for prospective students, and to articulate the synergies and complementarity of sustainability with their University experience.

Assessing our progress

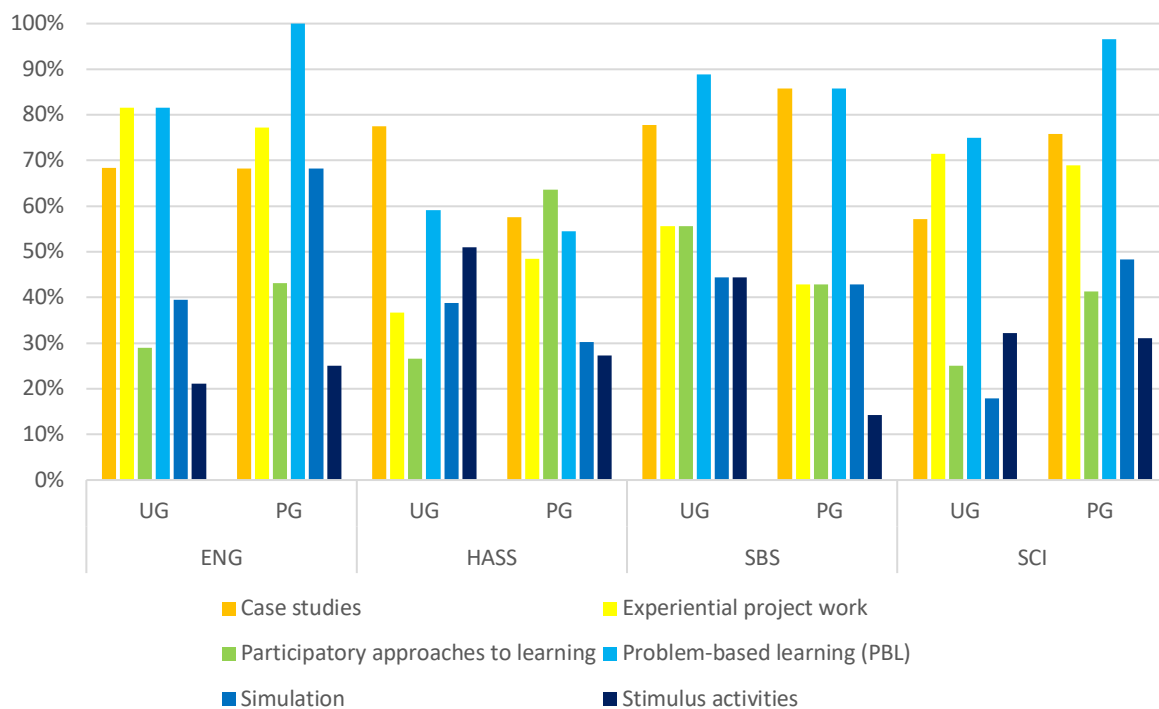
As well as our internal processes and milestone tracking, it is integral that we also seek external validation of our work in building the skills and competencies of our graduates. In 2023 University of Strathclyde gained its first accreditation from [Responsible Futures](#), a student led audit of our sustainability credentials. We will be seeking reaccreditation in 2025, where we are looking to improve on our previous scores given the significant progress we have made in several focal areas.

Appendices

A1. Faculty and Study Level Breakdown of Strathclyde responses for the questions relating to Sustainable Development definitions and implications for students (Strath 2024/25).

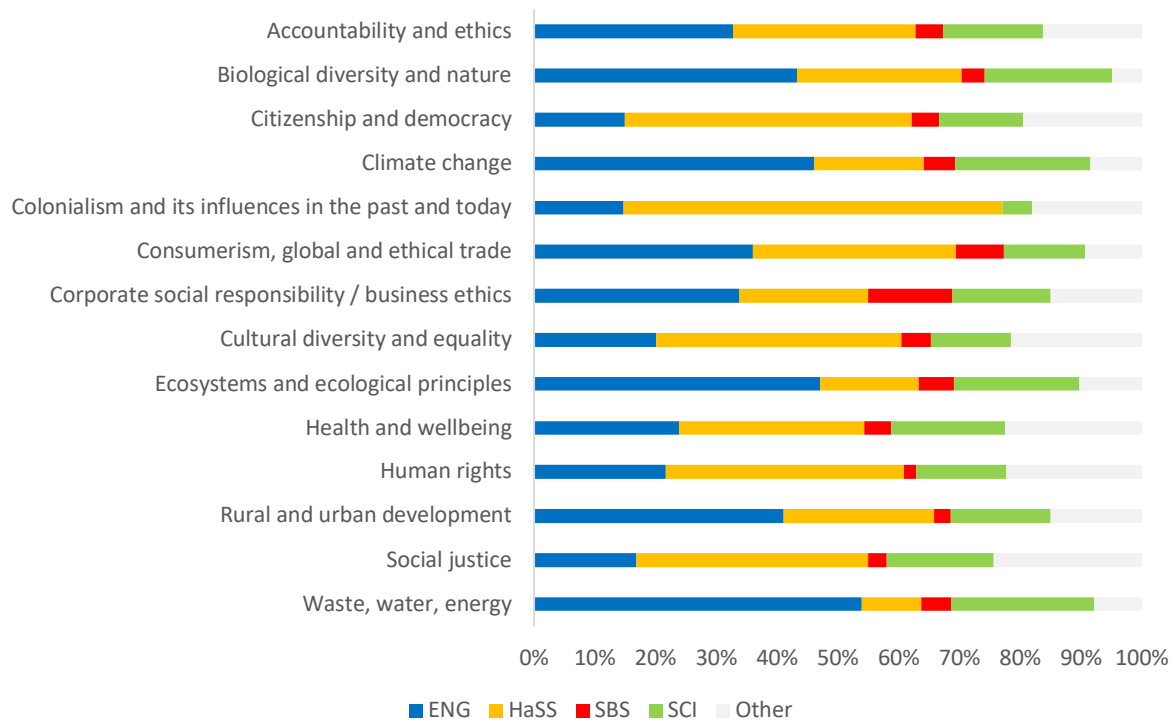


A2. Student's recognition of Ways of Learning they have 'experienced' during their studies at the given faculties as a percentage of their study level in that faculty (Strath 2024/25).



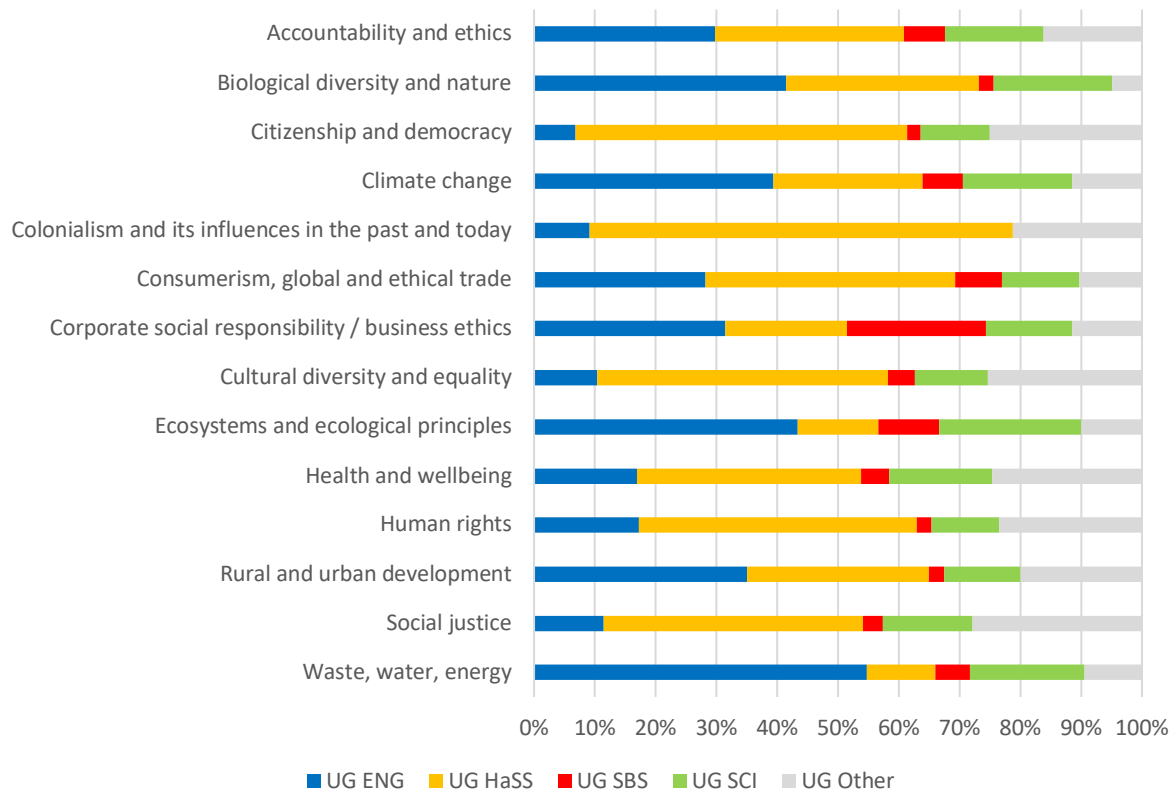
A3. Proportion of Students Who Agreed to Have Experienced Learning About Subjects Related to Sustainable Development at University Level – breakdown per faculty, study year.

A3.1. Breakdown by faculty

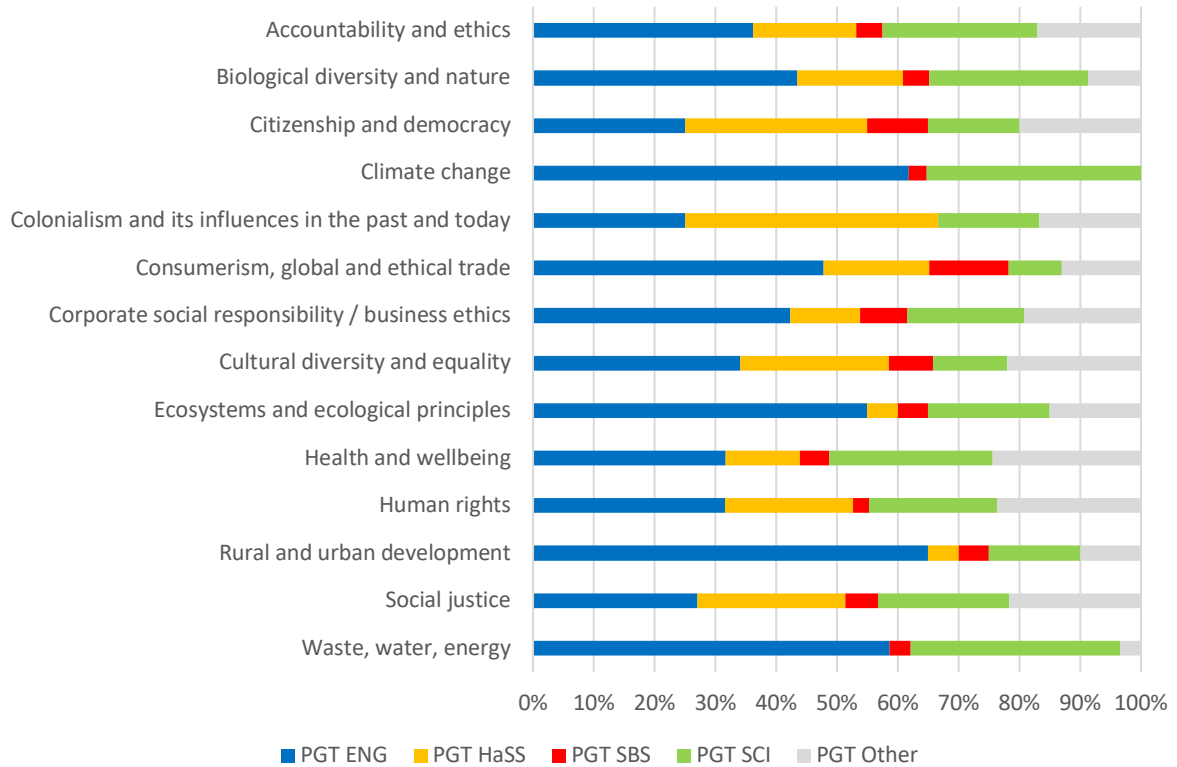


A3.2. Breakdown by Study Level

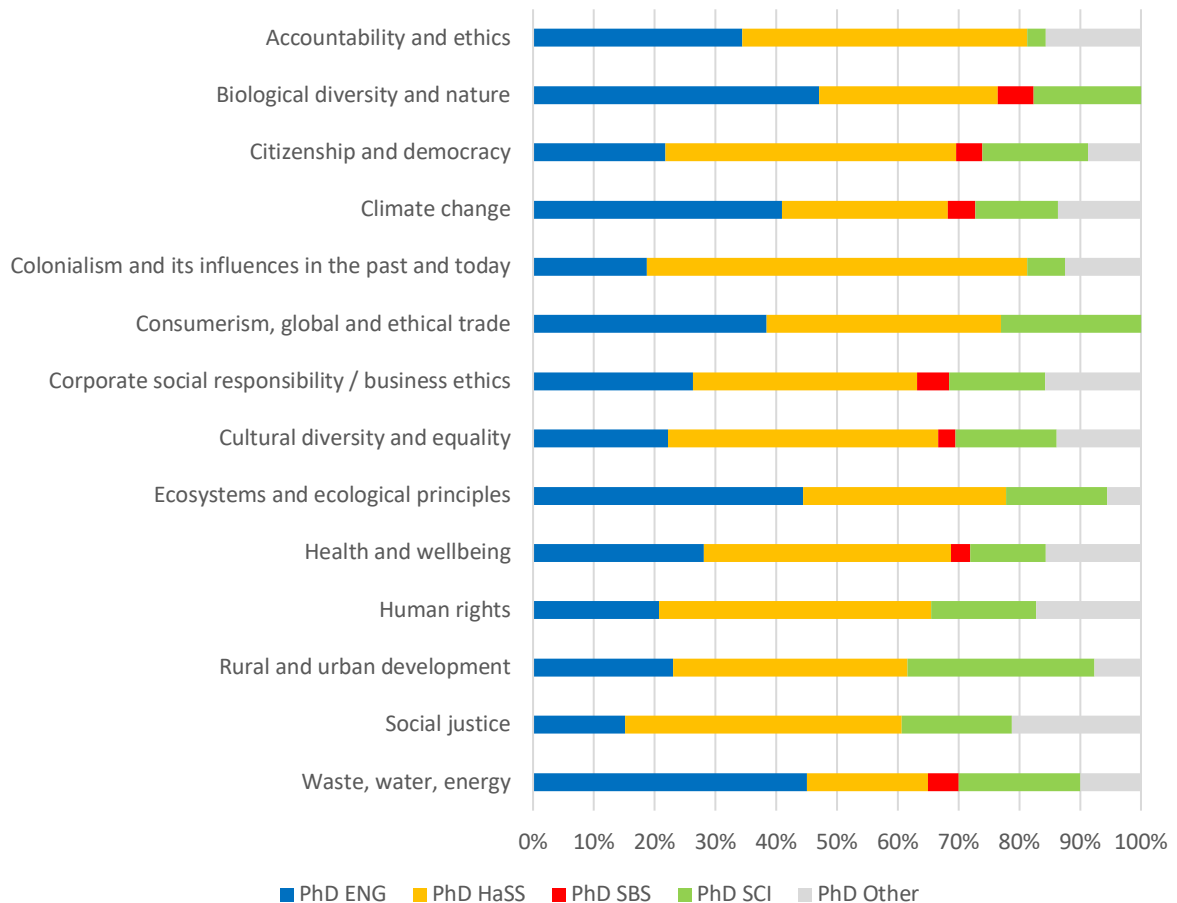
Undergraduate:



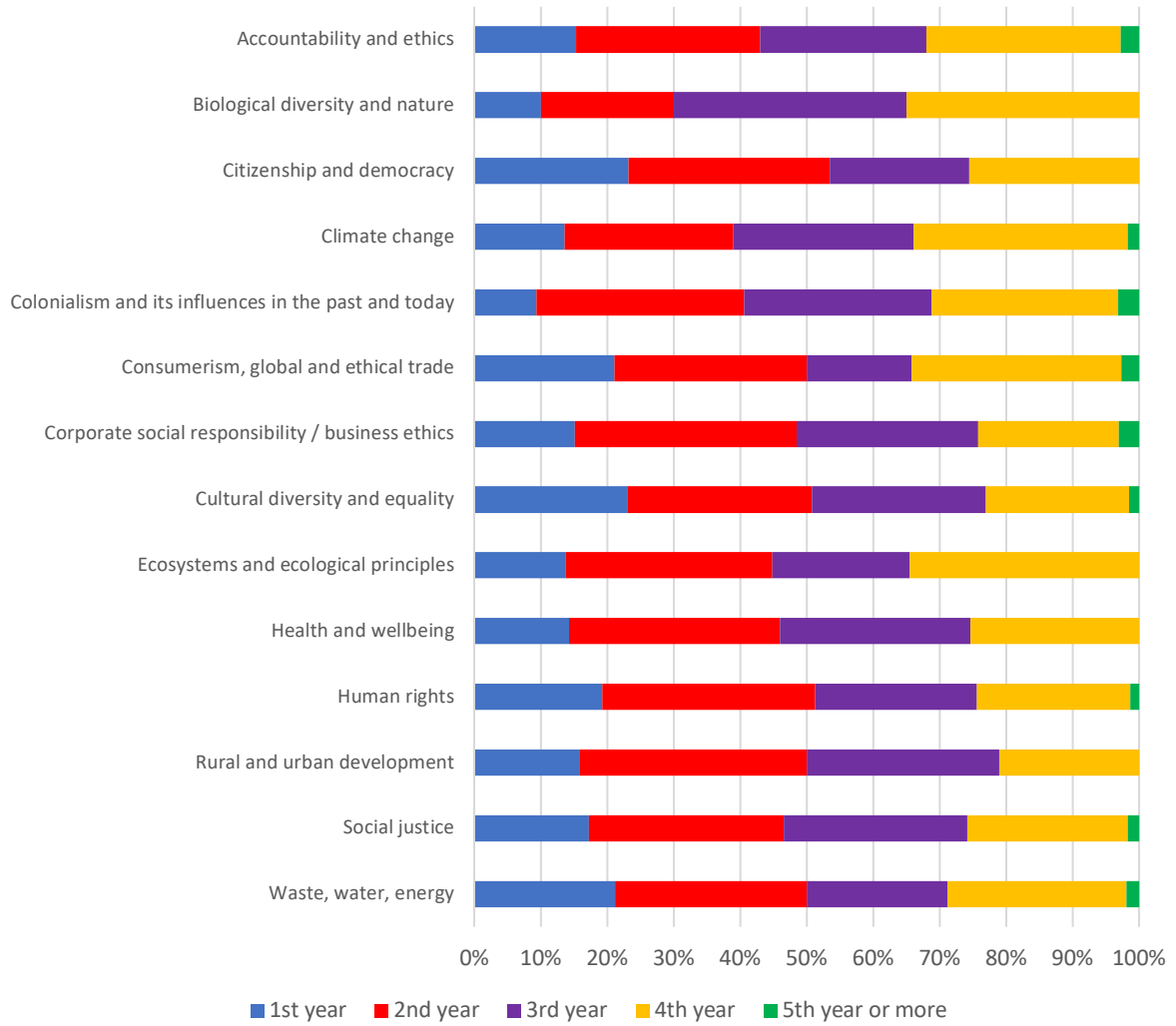
Postgraduate Taught (PGT)



Doctoral Studies (PhD)



A3.3. Breakdown by Undergraduate Study Year





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**CENTRE FOR
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Contact Us: sustainabledevelopment@strath.ac.uk