

Developing a sustainability toolkit for PhD students – empowering the next generation of change makers

About

A team of researchers, led by Dr Rob Amos, are developing an innovative Sustainability Toolkit, due to launch in 2026. This tool aims to guide PhD students in identifying how their research contributes to sustainability objectives.

Work

Engaging students with sustainability learning (SL) is an increasingly important concern for the higher education sector. It is reflected in numerous universities' strategies for SL, with a range of formal and extra-curricular initiatives being developed by both institutions and other organisations.

A neglected constituency in these efforts is PhD students, whose programmes typically contain limited taught content. This carries wider implications than simply restricting the opportunities open to PhD students while at university. SL is about equipping individuals with skills to aid society in making sustainable transitions and PhD students, who have the potential to be at the forefront of tackling contemporary global challenges, should therefore be at the forefront of efforts to deliver SL. As the need for sustainability learning (SL) rises in higher education, the University of Greenwich recognises an underserved group – PhD students – in their sustainability initiatives.

Through these links, the toolkit guides students to recognise their research as part of a holistic dialogue around resource use, societal needs and inequalities. The toolkit then supports them in integrating this perspective into their research framing and dissemination, enhancing its relevance to sustainability.

Furthermore, the toolkit aligns with the University of Greenwich's Strategy 2030 by embedding sustainability at every level of education. Empowering PhD students to view their research through a sustainability lens supports the university's mission to equip graduates to lead sustainable transformations in their fields.

The Sustainability Toolkit for PhD Students at the University of Greenwich exemplifies a proactive response to a significant educational gap. By helping doctoral students frame their research within a broader sustainability context, the toolkit empowers them to become leaders in addressing global challenges.

SDGs

