

## Introduction

approach to the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development. This means that our sustainable thinking and practice extends beyond the immediate campus environment to our research activities, curriculum development and leadership training. This paper provides guidance to panels and teams participating in validation and review on the following:

**Context:** Why is sustainability important?

**Definition:** What does sustainability mean for QMU and individual Programme Leaders?

**Graduate Attributes:** How do  
agenda?

**Documentation:** What should be included in the documentation presented for validation or review?

**QMU Model for embedding sustainable development into the curriculum:** What are the links between the student experience, the campus, research, knowledge exchange and accredited training?

**Checklist for validation and review events:** What should the panel look for and what kind of questions might usefully be explored with the team at the event?

**Support for programme teams:** What help is available?

**University Development:** How can the validation or review process be used to help embed sustainability at QMU?

## Context

is the overarching goal of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. There is an urgency to raise awareness and stimulate debate among staff and students at QMU: in Scotland, there is a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 42 per cent by 2020. Sustainable development is about more than climate change and protecting the environment: it is also about building better communities; ensuring society is fair and equitable; and working to improve health and well being (Scottish Government 2010).

Following the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence, students will commence their studies with a greater level of critical engagement with topical issues such as equity, lifestyle and climate change. They will expect to build effectively on this experience at QMU.

The Higher Education Academy vision for Education for Sustainable Development is that capabilities to contribute to sustainable and just societies (Higher Education Academy 2012).

### **Definition**

There are many different interpretations of sustainability and its dimensions. The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the lives of future generations. QMU has agreed on the following definition which embraces environmental, societal and economic considerations that support development and improved quality of life:

Education for sustainable development (ESD) seeks to raise awareness and understanding of the issues relating to sustainable development, social responsibility and corporate accountability: to help us learn how best we can participate in building stronger, safer, healthier communities and developing a sustainable economy; how best we can reduce our impact on the environment; and how best to cultivate skills and attributes which help us contribute to a just and equitable society.

Approaches to sustainability are discipline specific and each programme

Whether there are any discipline specific external reference points for sustainability, such as benchmark statements, and if so, how these have been used

Which dimensions of sustainability are included or excluded and the reasons for this (including the benefits for employers and the wider community)

Where sustainability is embedded in overarching Programme aims and outcomes

Where sustainability is embedded in individual modules consider the potential for greater impact in core modules

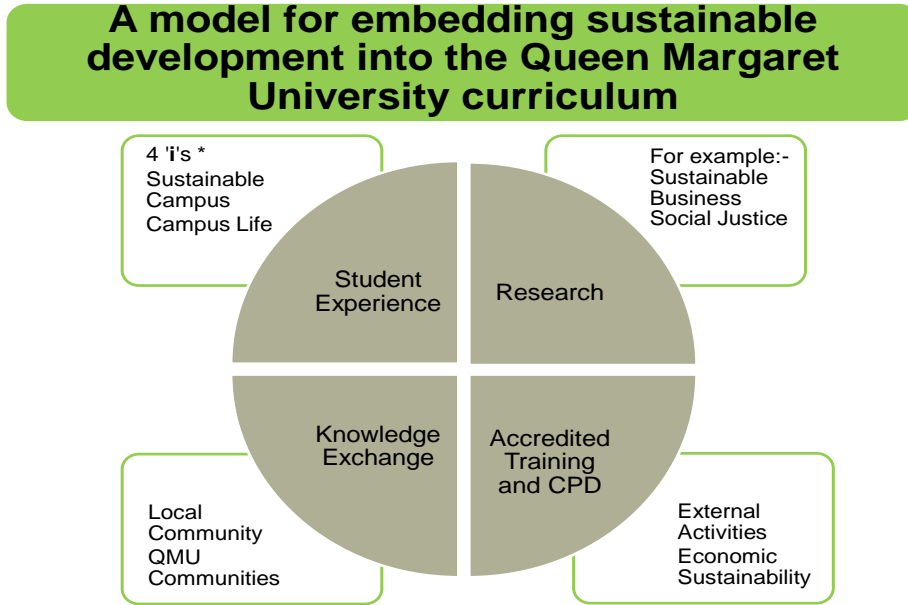
How students are informed about the QMU and Programme commitment to sustainability

How students are encouraged to engage critically with sustainable development

How staff are enabled to support the delivery of education for sustainable development

This may be summarised in the following flow chart which begins with the context for addressing education for sustainable development, QMU strategies providing direction and with the interpretation and implementation at Programme and Module level.:

## QMU Model for embedding sustainable development into the curriculum



## **University Development**

Panels are encouraged to identify aspects of good practice relating to sustainable development, which can be shared with other teams. Equally, where opportunities for strengthening sustainability in the curriculum are identified, it is open to the panel to make recommendations or set conditions. The Student Experience Committee, through the Sustainability Curriculum Working Group (or any subsequent group with a sustainability remit), will consider outcomes relating to sustainability at the end of each year to identify any trends and actions required on an institutional level.

**Carol Brennan**

**Convener, Sustainability Curriculum Working Group**

**18 June 2012 (updated 2016 to reflect the development of the new Student Experience Strategy)**