



Times Higher Education
**Sustainability
Impact Ratings**

SDG

1

No Poverty





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No Poverty

Why we measure

At least 10% of the world's population live in extreme poverty, unable to fulfil the most basic needs - food, health, education, access to clean water and sanitation.

Universities need to be able to demonstrate how they are helping to address this problem through their work. As employers and economic hubs universities have a direct role in reducing poverty in their communities. By giving people from poorer backgrounds quality education they help to remove intergenerational poverty.

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty/>

Links to other SDGs

SDG 1 relates widely to other SDGs, since the poorest people are most at risk from the direct experiences of a lack of sustainability. In particular, for universities, SDG 1 can be related to education, equality, and economic growth. Poor people are most likely to suffer from hunger (related to SDG2) and lack of access to clean water (related to SDG6).

Metrics and indicators

1.1 Research on poverty

1.1.1 Papers co-authored with low or lower-middle income countries

This indicator measures the proportion of a university's academic output where one or more co-author is associated with a university that is based in a low or lower-middle income country.

For SDG 1 it suggests the international reach of a university with a focus on low or lower-middle income countries.

This indicator is statistically normalised and it is worth 7% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 1.82% of the overall score).

1.1.2 No poverty: FWCI

This indicator explores the quality of a university's output in the area of poverty research using the number of citations received as a metric.

This number is normalised by publication type (paper, review, conference proceeding, book, or book chapter), by year of publication, and by subject. Subjects are defined using Elsevier's ASJC classification.

This indicator is normalised and it is worth 10% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 2.6% of the overall score).

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1.1.3 No poverty: publications

The number of publications looks at the scale of research output from a university around poverty. It is not scaled by the size of the institution – rather it looks at the overall impact.

This indicator is normalised and it is worth 10% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 2.60% of the overall score).

1.2 Proportion of students receiving financial aid to attend university because of poverty

One of the key barriers to participation in higher education is the financial ability to attend university. This indicator measures the proportion of a university's students who receive significant financial aid in order to attend the institution because of poverty.

This can also include refugee and displaced people, who often find their routes into higher education – or ability to continue higher education – are limited because of poverty as well as their immigration status.

It is measured using full time equivalent students across both undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

This metric relates to the UN Targets 1.3 and 1.A.

This indicator is normalised and it is worth 27% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 7.02% of the overall score)

1.2.1 Indicator: Low income students receiving financial aid

Year: 2024

Data Collected	Definition
Number of students	This is the FTE (Full Time Equivalent) number of students in all years and of all programmes that lead to a degree, certificate, institutional credit or other qualification, referring to year 2024.
Number of low income students receiving financial aid	This is the FTE (Full Time Equivalent) number of low income students who receive significant financial aid because of poverty. The number should refer to year 2024.

Data submission guidance

Overview

The metric is about the university providing financial aid to students, so that they have enough money to meet their basic needs. Basic needs include food, water, accommodation, clothing, sanitation, education, healthcare, internet. In this context we are following the [World Bank](#) definition, defining poverty in absolute terms.



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Definitions: Students

This is the FTE (full-time equivalent) number of students in all years and of all programmes that lead to a degree or certificate equivalent to an ISCED level 6, 7 or 8 qualification.

Typically these will be undergraduate AND postgraduate students who are studying for higher education programmes such as bachelor's, master's, doctoral or other equivalent degrees or components of those programmes.

For this measure we use the FTE (Full Time Equivalent) number of students. It can be calculated in a number of ways, including as the total number of modules studied during the year, divided by the number of modules of a full-time person.

This should include:

- Students on placements.
- Visiting/exchange students who are studying for programmes that result in credits at your institution (i.e., incoming students).
- Online and distance-learning students pursuing one or more of the afore mentioned programmes

This should NOT include:

- Students on programmes that do not lead to the afore-mentioned degrees or equivalent such as short courses, continuing education
- Exchange students who are currently studying at another institution (i.e., outgoing exchange students, who are not currently studying for credits at your institution).
- Students who are not currently active.

Guidance: low income students

Here we are referring to low income students regardless of the country they come from.

Definitions: Financial aid

This includes long- and short-term support:

- 'tuition assistance' that does not require repayment
- bursaries (non-repayable lump sums or annual stipends to students who are in most financial need)
- financial aid packages including low interest loans (borrowed money that needs to be repaid but with low interest) and work-study funds (work-study programme through which to earn money to help paying for study) option in addition to grants (financial aid that doesn't need to be repaid) or scholarships (financial aid that doesn't need to be repaid)
- tax benefits
- vouchers for study related expenses, e.g., for books, computers, supplies
- support for food, housing, transportation, legal services.

Financial aid must be provided by, or directed by, the institution.

Additional note: paying 'student assistants' as financial aid

This can be included as long as the people concerned are still defined as students and their pay doesn't affect the eligibility for receiving other financial aid. Additionally, students must be employed on basis

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of their financial need.

Definitions: Significance of aid

Partial financial aid can also be counted. We are looking for a significant level of support, but this does not need to be full support. Aid is significant if it represents support that permits attendance where otherwise it would be prohibitive. Clearly this is a judgment call (and depends on the overall costs involved with the university), but, for example, we would clearly count 100%, and clearly not count 1% or 5%.

1.3 University anti-poverty programmes

Universities need to address poverty of their students and potential students. This requires universities to commit to admitting students from backgrounds where poverty is a factor, and ensuring that these students have the support necessary to complete their studies.

Universities should also have a commitment to supporting students experiencing poverty in low or lower-middle income countries across the world.

There are a total of 15 points that could be gained from meeting the criteria in this metric, and it is worth 23% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 5.98% of the overall score).

This metric and indicators relate to the UN Targets 1.1, 1.3 and 1.A.

#	Indicator	Maximum score
1.3.1	Bottom financial quintile admission target Year: 2024 Targets to admit students who fall into the bottom 20% of household income group (or a more tightly defined target) in the country. Up to three points based on: • Existence of targets – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	4.6% in SDG (1.2% Overall)
1.3.2	Bottom financial quintile student success Year: 2024 Graduation/completion targets for students who fall into the bottom 20% of household income group (or a more tightly defined target) in the country Up to three points based on: • Existence of targets – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	4.6% in SDG (1.2% Overall)



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1.3.3	Low-income student support Year: 2024 Provide support (e.g. food, housing, transportation, legal services) for students from low-income families to enable them to complete university Up to three points based on: • Existence of support – maximum one point for free, only 0.25 points for subsidised support • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	4.6% in SDG (1.2% Overall)
1.3.4	Bottom financial quintile student support Year: 2024 Programmes or initiatives to assist students who fall into the bottom 20% of household income group (or a more tightly defined target) in the country to successfully complete their studies. Up to three points based on: • Existence of programmes or initiatives – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	4.6% in SDG (1.2% Overall)
1.3.5	Low or lower-middle income countries student support Year: 2024 Schemes to support poor students from low or lower-middle income countries (e.g. offering free education, grants). Up to three points based on: • Existence of schemes – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	4.6% in SDG (1.2% Overall)

Data submission guidance

Definitions of income:

When we refer to countries that are ‘**Low or lower-middle income**’ this relates to the definition of the country used by the World Bank. We also refer to the income of individuals or households in the country, for example ‘**household income**’ refers to the income of people in the country. All countries will have people with low relative incomes despite the country’s status, or lower-middle income’ refer to countries and ‘household income’ refers to the people in the country.

Guidance: Bottom financial quintile:

Here we are exploring specific targeting of individuals because of poverty. The bottom financial quintile refers to people in the lowest 20% by income. However, the actual target group could be tighter (for example the lowest 10%) – the important thing is that there is a target associated with poverty.



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In some situations, this could be based on geographic based measurements – for example targeting people from the poorest neighbourhoods. This could also include targets that include refugee students or displaced students who also experience poverty.

Guidance: Target to admit students:

We are looking for examples of focusing activities at people who may not be able to attend university because of serious financial disadvantages. This can include long term objectives and measurements that support them where discrimination at the point of admission is not permissible. For example, pipeline programs would fit under this definition.

Guidance: Provide support (1.3.3):

This is about the institution connecting students to services they need so they are more likely to continue their education instead of dropping out. An example could be a 'support center' on campus.

Guidance: Have programmes or initiatives (1.3.4):

This is about specific programmes as a continuous, targeted and coordinated approach to helping poor students graduate.

Student loans are acceptable as initiatives as long as they can be described as non-commercial rate loans, or if they are targeted at students suffering from poverty.

As reference for 1.3.3 and 1.3.5 we are using the World Bank list of economies. For the current 2026 fiscal year, low-income economies are defined as those with a GNI per capita, calculated using the World Bank Atlas method, of \$1,135 or less in 2024; lower middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$1,136 and \$4,495. The current classification by income categorises 25 countries under 'low income' and 50 countries under 'lower-middle income' economies. The XLS format file can be downloaded [here](#).

1.4 Community anti-poverty programmes

Universities have a responsibility, as stewards of significant resources, to support the wider community in tackling poverty.

These are programmes and/or activities designed or intended to relieve poverty. These programmes can be community-led but they will be supported by the university.

There are a total of 12 points that could be gained from meeting the criteria in this metric, it is worth 23% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 5.98% of the overall score).

This metric and indicators relates to the UN Targets 1.3, 1.4 and 1.B.



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#	Indicator	Maximum score
1.4.1	Local start-up assistance Year: 2024 Provide assistance in the local community supporting the start-up of financially and socially sustainable businesses through relevant education or resources (e.g. mentorship programmes, training workshops, access to university facilities). Up to three points based on: • Existence of assistance – maximum one point for free, only 0.25 points for subsidised support • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	5.75% in SDG (1.5% Overall)
1.4.2	Local start-up financial assistance Year: 2024 Provide financial assistance to the local community supporting the start-up of financially and socially sustainable businesses. Up to three points based on: • Existence of assistance – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	5.75% in SDG (1.5% Overall)
1.4.3	Programmes for services access Year: 2024 Organise training or programmes to improve access to basic services for all. Up to three points based on: • Existence of programmes – maximum one point for directly supplied, only 0.25 points for indirect programmes • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	5.75% in SDG (1.5% Overall)
1.4.4	Policy addressing poverty Year: 2024 Participate in policy making at local, regional, national and/or global level to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions. Up to three points based on: • Existence of participation – 0.25 points for each level of local, regional, national and global policy making • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	5.75% in SDG (1.5% Overall)



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Definitions: Basic services

This refers to Health (covering Nutrition, Child mortality) and Standard of living (covering cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, assets).

Definitions: Sustainable business

This refers to businesses that are economically sustainable in the long term, will have a positive social impact and provide real opportunities for the community.
