



Times Higher Education
**Sustainability
Impact Ratings**

SDG

4

Quality Education





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Why we measure

A high-quality education should be an area where universities excel. Education is a key gateway out of inequalities, especially multi-generational ones. In addition to improving quality of life, access to inclusive education can help equip locals with the tools required to develop innovative solutions to the world's greatest problems. SDG 4 explores early years and lifelong learning.

We are exploring how universities support early years, lifelong learning, and their nations through ensuring equality of access to their facilities.

Although the UN includes Education for Sustainable Development in SDG 4, we have chosen instead to measure that as part of SDG 17, as this is the mandatory SDG within our ranking, and in the case of universities it is a key factor of partnership around the goals.

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

Links to other SDGs

Education is a precursor to growing an economy sustainably, not just at higher education levels, but importantly in early years and lifelong learning. It is a gateway out of poverty (SDG1), especially intergenerational poverty. Education delivered fairly helps to break down inequalities (SDG10), and provides the key workers needed to support a fair and sustainable world (SDG8).

Metrics and indicators

4.1 Research on early years and lifelong learning education

4.1.1 Quality Education: paper views

This indicator measures the proportion of a university's research papers that are viewed or downloaded. This is important because the practical nature of education means that use of research is as important as citation of research.

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

4.1.2 Quality Education: CiteScore

This indicator measures the proportion of a university's publications appear in the top 10% of journals according to the Citescore metric. It is intended to reflect on excellence of academic output.

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

4.1.3 Quality Education: publications

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

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

4.2 Proportion of graduates with teaching qualification

To understand how a university is supporting early years education we measure the proportion of its graduates who gained a qualification that entitled them to teach at primary school level in their country.

The metric tries to show how universities are ensuring that primary education is adequately resourced.

The metric relates to the UN Targets 4.C

This indicator is normalised and is worth 15.40% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 4% of the overall score).

4.2.1 Indicator: Proportion of graduates with relevant qualification for teaching Year: 2024

Data Collected	Definition
Number of graduates	This is the total headcount number of graduates at all levels from your institution in year 2024.
Number of graduates who gained a qualification that entitled them to teach at primary school level	This is the headcount number of graduates at all levels from your institution who gained a qualification that entitled them to teach at primary school level, referring to year 2024. This is a subset of the total number of graduates.

Data submission guidance

Definition: Graduates:

see 2.4

We are evaluating the proportion of your graduates who are able to teach at primary school level in the country of your institution because of the education they have received. For this data point we also include postgraduate teaching qualifications (e.g. PGCE).

Please state which courses are designed to prepare for teaching at primary level, e.g. teacher training programmes.



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4.3 Lifelong learning measures

Universities need to highlight lifelong learning opportunities they provide

There are a total of 16 points that could be gained from meeting the criteria in this metric, and is worth 26.80% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 6.97% of the overall score).

This metric and indicators relate to the UN Targets 4.4., 4.5, 4.7, 4.A.

#	Indicator	Maximum score
4.3.1	Public resources (lifelong learning) Year: 2024 Provide free access to educational resources for those not studying at the university. Up to three points based on: - Existence of access provision – 0.4 points for free courses leading to certificate or award, 0.4 points for free access to campus facilities and equipment, 0.2 points for free access to online resources. - Evidence provided – up to one point - Is the evidence provided public – one point	5% in SDG (1.30% Overall)
4.3.2	Public events (lifelong learning) Year: 2024 Host educational events at university that are open to the general public. Up to three points based on: - Existence of events – maximum one point for all free events, 0.5 points for both charged and free, 0.25 points for charged only. - Evidence provided – up to one point - Is the evidence provided public – one point	5% in SDG (1.30% Overall)
4.3.3	Vocational training events (lifelong learning) Year: 2024 Host events at university that are open to the general public: executive education programmes (this refers to short courses for people who are not attending the university; this specifically excludes courses like MBA) and/or vocational training. Up to three points based on: - Existence of events – maximum one point for both ad-hoc and programmed, 0.75 points for programmed only, and 0.25 points for ad-hoc only - Evidence provided – up to one point - Is the evidence provided public – one point	5% in SDG (1.30% Overall)



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4.3.4	Education outreach activities beyond campus Year: 2024 Undertake educational outreach activities (e.g. tailored lectures or demonstrations) beyond campus – in local schools, in the community. This can include voluntary student-run schemes. Up to three points based on: • Existence of activities – maximum one point • for both ad-hoc and programmed, 0.75 points for programmed only, and 0.25 points for ad-hoc only • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	5% in SDG (1.30% Overall)
4.3.5	Lifelong learning access policy Year: in place by 2024 A policy that ensures that access to these activities is accessible to all, regardless of ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status or gender. Up to four points based on: • Existence of policy – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point • Is policy created or reviewed in period 2020-2024 – one point	6.80% in SDG (1.77% Overall)

4.4 Proportion of first-generation students

Year: 2024

This is defined as the number of students starting a degree who identify as being the first person in their immediate family to attend university, divided by the total number of students starting a degree. All data is provided as full-time equivalents.

The metric is set to demonstrate that universities are able to provide education for disadvantaged groups – no group should be left behind.

The metric relates to the UN Targets 4.3 and 4.5.

This indicator is normalised and is worth 30.80% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 8.01% of the overall score).



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4.4.1 Indicator: Proportion of first-generation students Year 2024

Data Collected	Definition
Number of students starting a degree	This is the FTE (Full Time Equivalent) number of students starting a degree at the university in 2024. This is a subset of number of students.
Number of first-generation students starting a degree	This is the FTE (Full Time Equivalent) number of students starting a degree at the university in 2024 who are first generation students. A first-generation student is one who reports they are the first person in their immediate family to attend university at any level (note - the individual may have studied at another university previously). This is a subset of the total number of students starting a degree.

Data submission guidance

Definition: Number of students starting a degree

For universities teaching undergraduates this is the FTE (Full Time Equivalent) number of students starting a first degree at the university. This will include bachelor's and other equivalent degrees, equivalent to Unesco ISCED-2011 Level 6. (See methodology document for links to ISCED-2011).

For post-graduate only institutions this is the FTE number of students starting a master's or PhD degree, equivalent to UNESCO ISCED-2011 Level 7 or 8.

If an institution is awarding undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, we only want the number of students commencing an undergraduate degree for both data points.

Definition: relevant year

We are looking for the number of students who started their studies in 2024. The focus is on students who started their studies at this university, second year (and beyond) students do not count.

Definition: 'immediate family'

We do not apply a fixed definition of 'immediate family', but in most cases it refers to parents, grandparents and siblings. Ultimately, however, it would be down to the individual concerned and her/his definition of 'immediate family' which then results in her/him reporting as 'first generation' student.

Guidance: previous study

If student studied and graduated at University A and then enrolls at University B for further study, they can still be a first generation student at University B. It is the student, not the level of study that is relevant to the definition.