

Co-creating the blueprint for quality Education for Sustainability

QAA Collaborative Enhancement Project 2022-23

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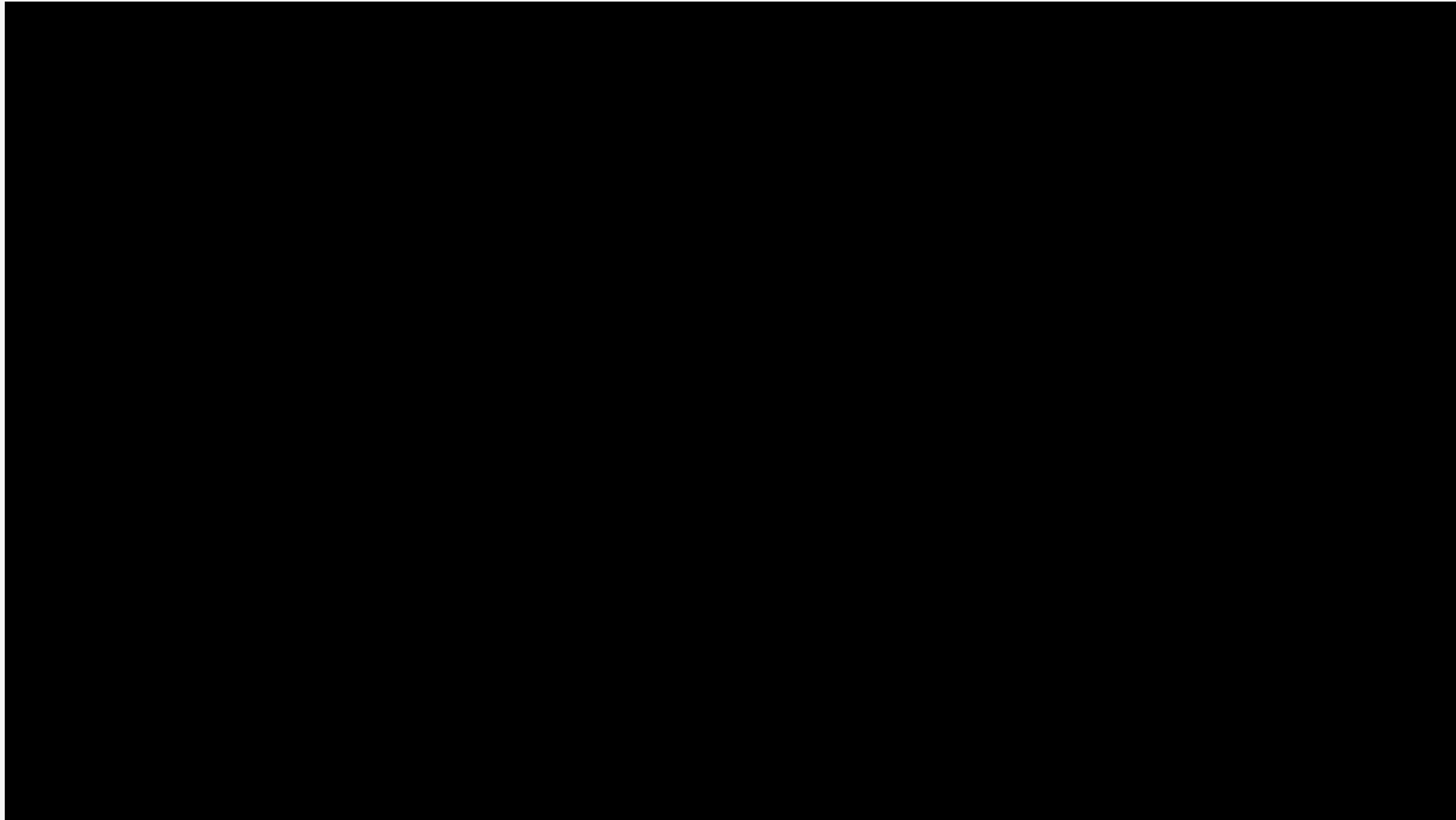
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Project in a Nutshell



PART 1 – Project Foundations

PART 2 – Project Activities

PART 3 – Findings and Outputs



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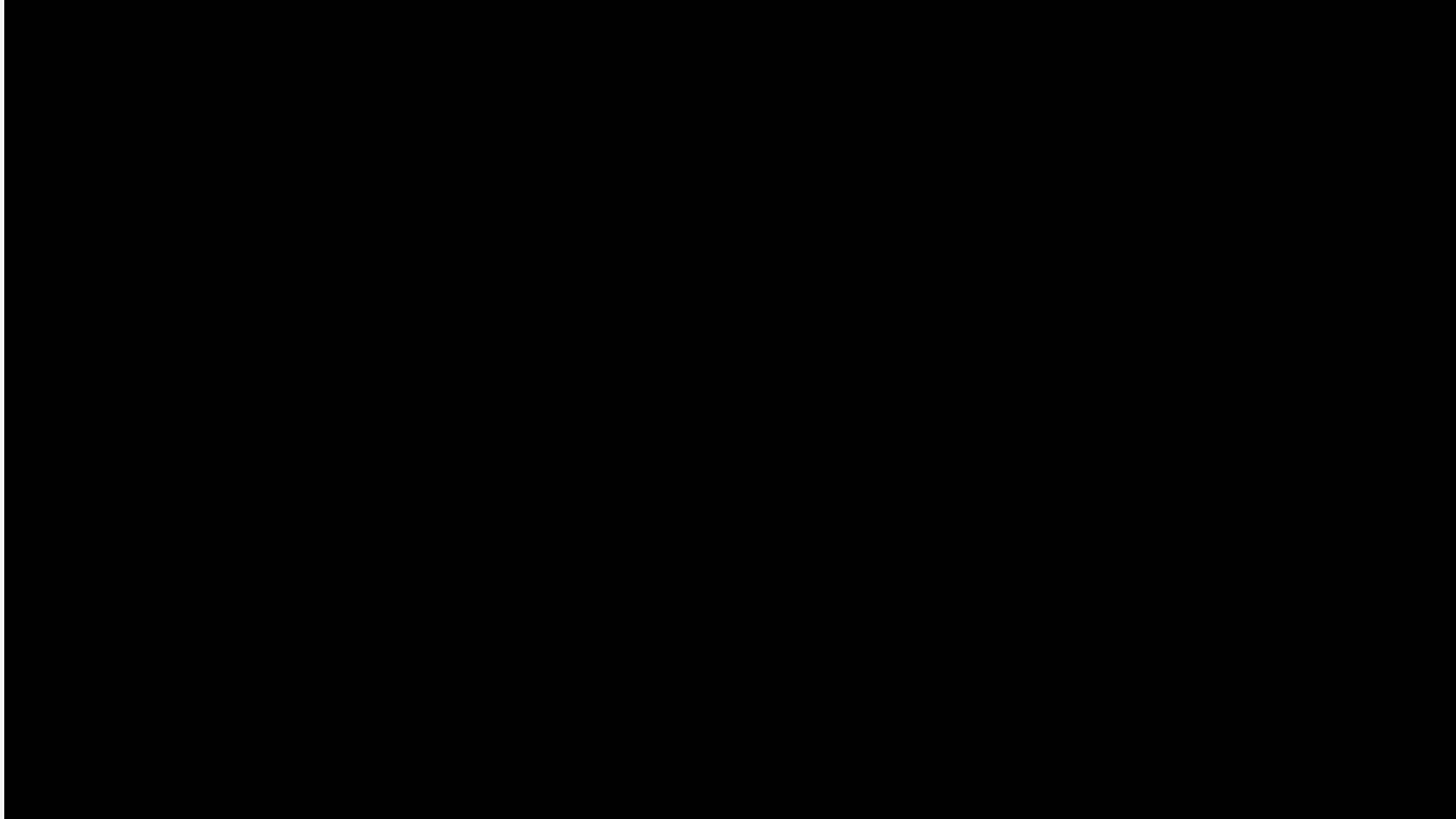
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The role of education in sustainability



Education for Sustainability skills

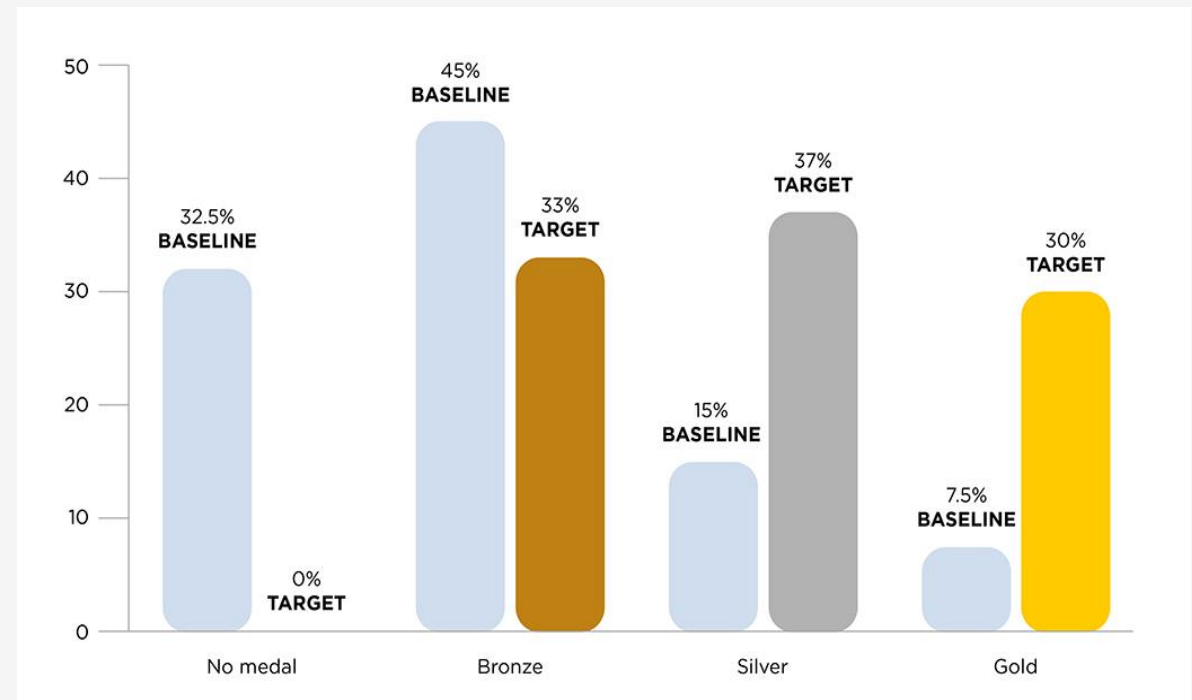


Quality Principles

1. Joined-up sustainability learning – ‘people, profit, planet’ not issues in silos
2. Integrated into compulsory modules
3. Learning experiences at all levels of study
4. Embedded as part of assessment design

Ratings: Bronze, Silver, Gold, or ‘no medal’

Requires principle 1 to get Bronze



Student Co-Creators

But do students' EfS experiences match the aims of course designers?

Why we put students at the centre of this project:

- To user-test the principles
- To get student course ratings
- To see the sector response on EfS through student eyes



Partner Perspectives

University of the Arts London

- Mobilising new climate plan with an EfS framework for T&L
- Looking for quality markers to strengthen wider embedding
- Aim to better reflect learner perspectives into the framework

King's College London

- Aiming to roll out wider plans for embedding of EfS into courses
- Looking for quality anchors to expand and strengthen practice
- Starting from an initial UN global goals mapping exercise



Sector review

35 leading UK universities working to embed EfS – desk-based survey of website info with right of reply

2 essential questions:

1. Mainstreaming – targets for all courses and students?
2. Quality – are they working on an authentic EfS offer?

Findings

- 16 of 35 have all courses EfS targets – only 3 targeting compulsory learning; only 4 aim at all levels of study
- 19 of 35 have audited – 2 looked for EfS; 12 for single UN global goals; 2 for skills on UN goals; rest unclear



Road testing activities

Student team shaped creation and delivery of:

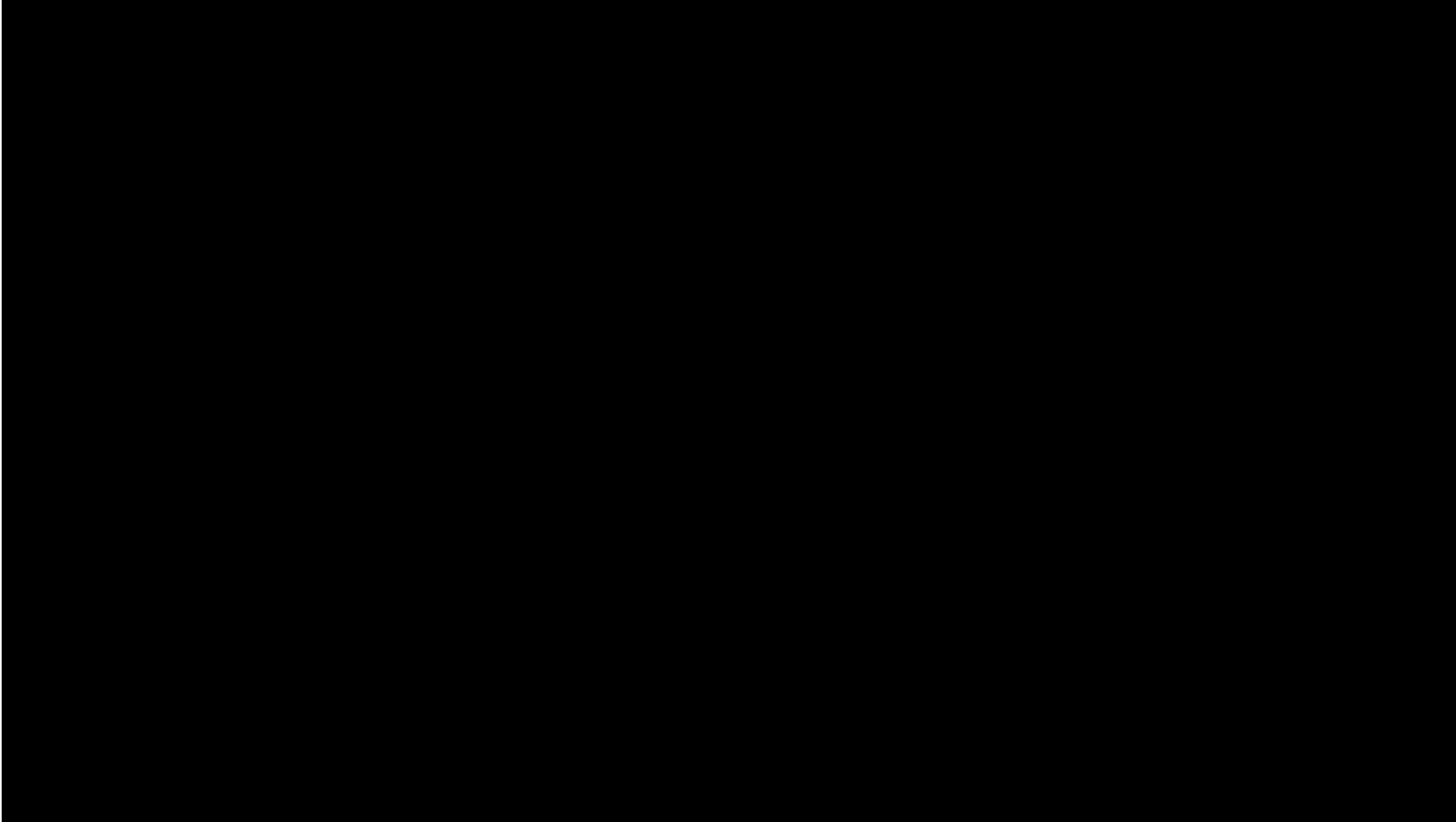
- **6 short films** on EfS essentials and the principles for sustainability learning
- **Speed training dashboard** with self-practice examples and extra insights
- **Engagement activities** with students at each of the 3 partner settings

QAA Student Strategic Advisory Committee advised the project and joined in road-testing

132 student assessors rated 87 different courses at 9 universities, including 40% of UoG courses rated by staff in 2021



How to rate a course



Business module – level 4 [this module is compulsory]

Students are introduced to the workings of the global music industries.

Students are introduced to the global goals framework and the concept of the triple bottom line, and encouraged to think about how they can apply the goals as within the music business.



Sport module – level 5 [this module is compulsory]

Students look at how sport is used for international development.

They look at a range of sporting organisations and their response to development needs in the context of issues like influencing social justice, equality or wellbeing.



Architecture course

Sustainability is very strong and clear in both the module content and assessment at level 4, 5 and 6 of this course.

Students can see the relationships between people, the environment and economy.

Students work on live briefs with industry partners – critically addressing sustainability through a strong employability focus.



Student experiences

45% of the UOG high volume cohort said the experience as an assessor raised their insight and expectations around EfS

“This made me more aware of how little sustainability is built into the learning I experienced at UG and PG level. For all the talk of sustainability in the classroom, it has rarely if at all gone beyond surface-level input.

This project has given me a sense of excitement for the steps that can be taken by course teams to rectify this and make sustainability a key feature of all courses.”

(QAA student advisory board member)



Student approval – principles & training

51% positive approval of the quality principles

23% positive with suggestions to improve communication and understanding of the principles

25% neutral and only 1% made any critical comments

“I think this was an effective rating system to assist sustainability learning by analysing all the major corners of a student's education, better highlighting the key issues and needs for change” (UAL student)

“The training has been really useful because it took us through every aspect of sustainability learning and now I understand it a lot better than when I started. I plan to take this new understanding into consideration. What I would like to see from my course is more clear connections to sustainability” (UOG student)



UoG staff vs student ratings

From an even spread of replies across levels of study and course clusters:

52% agreement between staff and student ratings of the same course

23% of students gave more optimistic ratings and 21% less optimistic!

21 courses had multiple raters:

- 8 of these were rated consistently
- 7 spanned the 2 nearby levels
- 6 showed more divergent views



Resources:

- [Main project website](#) – key info, project report, quality principles and rating criteria, example decisions, sector review report
- [Anti-greenwash education kit for students](#) – training materials and short films on EfS, examples of ratings, glossary of terms



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