

# ESD IN POST-COMPULSORY INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Part of the Sustainable Skills Project:

**EMBEDDING EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT IN FURTHER EDUCATION**

August 2011



## ESD IN POST-COMPULSORY INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

This report is part of Lancashire Global Education Centre's 3-year "Sustainable Skills" project, which commenced in July 2009. Funded by the Department for International Development, the project is working with colleges in the North West to embed concepts of Sustainable Development (SD) into the teaching of vocational courses. This will enable students and tutors to improve their understanding of:

- their role in global poverty and other development issues;
- the relationship between their careers and sustainable development;
- practical skills that contribute toward positive social and environmental change

The report was researched and prepared by Magnified Learning.

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For more information on the Sustainable Skills project and to access free project resources, please visit:

<http://www.lgec.org.uk/Projects/Sustainable-Skills-Project>

### Contact us:

Vicky Hutchinson, Further Education Coordinator

[vicky.hutchinson@lgec.org.uk](mailto:vicky.hutchinson@lgec.org.uk)

Sarah Whitman, Education for Sustainable Development Coordinator

[sarah.whitman@lgec.org.uk](mailto:sarah.whitman@lgec.org.uk)

Phone: 01772 252299

Lancashire Global Education Centre

18a Ribblesdale Place

Preston, PR1 3NA

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## Executive Summary

This report was commissioned as part of Lancashire Global Education Centre's 3-year Sustainable Skills project. The purpose of the survey was to explore:

- the degree to which sustainable development (SD) features in the formal preparation for beginning teachers who intend to work in the lifelong learning sector;
- barriers to engagement with SD in post-compulsory initial teacher education;
- the appetite amongst practitioners of post-compulsory initial teacher education for continuing professional development (CPD) relating to SD.

The report finds that:

- there are FE and HEIs providers of ITE which offer learning about ESD as part of their programmes, but they are in a minority;
- in most cases teaching about SD and ESD is absent from ITE provision;
- a minority of **FE ITE lecturers** are unclear about how if they or their ITE colleagues undertook CPD on ESD, it could benefit **beginning teachers**;
- a minority of **FE ITE lecturers** are unclear about how if they or their ITE colleagues undertook CPD on ESD, it could benefit **the sector as a whole**;
- a minority of **HEI ITE lecturers** are unclear about how if they or their ITE colleagues undertook CPD on ESD, it could benefit **beginning teachers**;
- the relevance of sustainable development to all vocational areas is not fully grasped, and is can be viewed as a separate 'topic' rather than a cross-cutting theme;
- a majority of ITE staff who teach about SD either have not or are not known to have undertaken associated CPD;
- the inclusion of teaching about SD on ITE programmes in FE colleges is allied to increased appetite for further associated CPD.

## Introduction

This report was commissioned as part of Lancashire Global Education Centre's 3-year Sustainable Skills project, funded by UKaid, Department for International Development. Lancashire Global Education Centre (LGEC) is working with staff in further education (FE) colleges in the North West to embed concepts of sustainable development (SD) into post-compulsory vocational curricula.

The case for the FE sector's engagement with sustainable development is unassailable. The current UK government recognises the existence of a gap in skills for sustainable development, as did its predecessor. In February 2011 Skills Minister John Hayes stated:

'The Prime Minister has set an ambition for this to be the greenest government ever. To achieve this, government, employers and training providers must work together to deliver the skills that will enable our economy to achieve truly sustainable growth.'<sup>1</sup>

Added to this imperative, economic pressures impacting upon the sector increasingly demand the implementation of intelligent resource utilisation and efficiency strategies. The sector's growing responsibility to contribute to agendas such as economic and social well-being, community development and localism, demands that it both sees and acts upon the bigger picture. In a time of mounting concerns about the probity and transparency of commerce and industry, employers are becoming more keenly attuned to how they are perceived and to the need for employees who share this awareness. And a growing number of sector voices are urging the need for greater attention to the development of global skills and sensitivities. See for instance, *Learning and Skills for a Global Economy* (LSIS, 2010):

'it seems obvious that nation states can no longer ignore learning about other cultures, societies and political systems in the development of their educational programmes. In particular, people will need to understand and engage with different viewpoints and perspectives for both economic and social reasons....

education's responses – including that of colleges and other training providers – have to address more than the economic dimension of globalisation.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nsaet.org.uk/news/?p=44>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.lsis.org.uk/Services/Publications/Documents/Globalisation-Research-Report.pdf>

An understanding of sustainable development can underpin and render these myriad concerns coherent, enabling whole-organisation and whole-sector success.

The number of FE sector providers responding to this challenge grows almost daily, and many are members of thriving SD networks coordinated by organisations such as the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges, (EAUC), LSIS, People and Planet, and Lancashire Global Education Centre. And with all this activity comes resources and case studies of effective practice – see for instance:

- <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/sustainability>
- <http://www.eauc.org.uk/sorted/home>
- <http://peopleandplanet.org/sixthforms/>
- <http://www.lgec.org.uk/Projects/Sustainable-Skills-Project>

If there is one area which is crucial to the success of this enterprise it is post-compulsory initial teacher education. Since the publication in 2006 of *Sustainable Development in the Learning and Skills Sector: national baseline survey* (LSN), several helpful regional FE sustainable development audits have been completed. These have included London, the East Midlands, the South East, the East of England, and the South West.<sup>i</sup> This survey, however, marks a first step to form a national picture of the role currently played by education for sustainable development (ESD) in preparing teachers for the challenges and opportunities of teaching for and about SD in the lifelong learning sector.

Since September 2007 new entrants and unqualified existing practitioners in lifelong learning settings have been required to achieve relevant unitised qualifications belonging to the Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) framework. These qualifications are:

- Award in Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (**PTLLS**)
- Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (**CTLLS**): both PTLLS and CTLLS students might be new entrants to the sector wishing to become associate teachers, i.e. someone using off-the-shelf teaching materials, to teach specific learners, or a specific subject at one level only.

- Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (**DTLLS**): students are those aiming for fully qualified FE or adult community learning teacher status.

While some HEIs may continue to badge their courses as Post Graduate Certificates in Education and Certificates in Education, content is required to comply with the QTLS framework.

The purpose of this survey was to identify:

- the degree to which sustainable development (SD) features in the formal preparation for beginning teachers intending to work in the lifelong learning sector;
- key barriers to engagement with SD in post-compulsory initial teacher education;
- the appetite amongst practitioners of post-compulsory initial teacher education for continuing professional development (CPD) relating to SD.

## Sample, methodology and method

The research was conducted between April and June 2011.

The population for this survey was FE colleges and higher education institutions (HEIs) providing initial teacher education/training (ITE).

The AoC lists the current number FE colleges in England - not all of which are providers of ITE - as 351<sup>3</sup>. For the purposes of this research, these were segmented according to the 9 former LSC regions:

- East of England
- East Midlands
- London
- North East
- North West
- South East
- South West
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and Humberside

5 colleges from each of these regions were randomly selected, making a total FE college sample of 45 or 12.8% of the national total.

Phone contact was then made to check that the selected colleges were current providers of initial teacher education. In the few instances where they were not, a further random selection was made.

A similar process was undertaken to identify 1 HEI per region which currently acts as a provider and/or validating organisation for post-compulsory initial teacher education qualifications. Hotcourses.com currently lists 32 English HEIs as providers of post-compulsory teacher education. While the actual number is doubtless higher, it is probable that the sample of 9 HEIs is within 15% to 18% of the national total.

Once selection was complete, contact details of persons with responsibility for ITE were sought. Wherever possible these individuals were then contacted and briefed by phone about the project, prior to receiving an email with a short questionnaire attachment. Identical questionnaires were dispatched to FE Colleges and HEIs (see appendix 1).

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.aoc.co.uk/en/about\\_colleges/index.cfm](http://www.aoc.co.uk/en/about_colleges/index.cfm)

# Research findings

## 1. Questionnaire responses

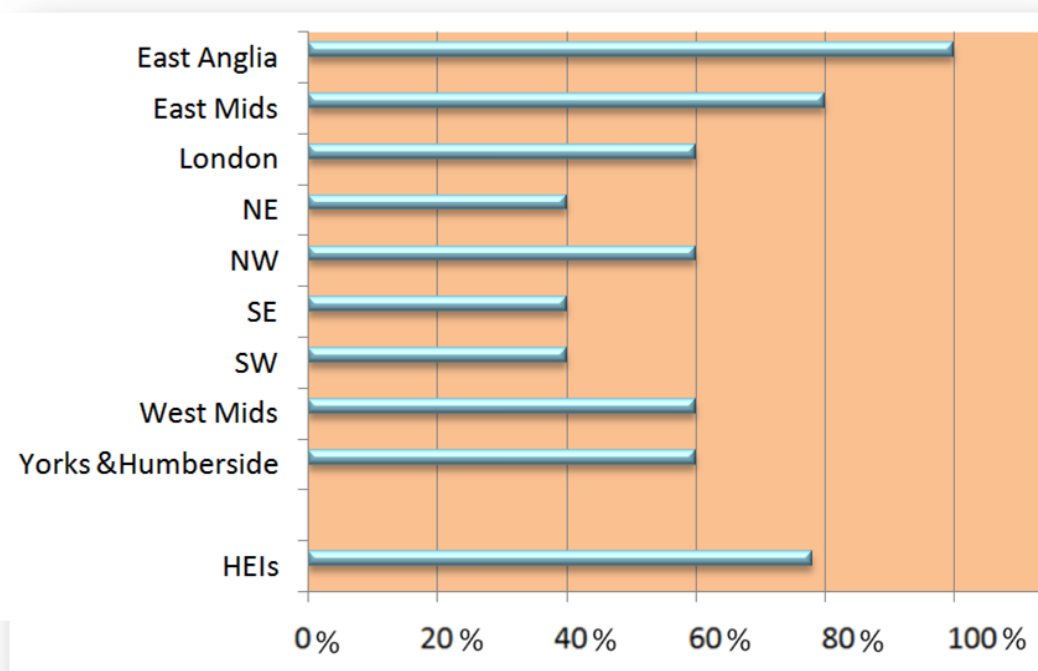


Fig 1.

- Overall 27 FE colleges (60% of sample) responded to the survey. This represents 7.7% of the national total of FE colleges. Moreover, it should be noted that not all 351 FE colleges in England are providers of ITE.
- The East of England region provided the highest response rate, with all 5 colleges (100% of sample) returning.
- Lowest FE response rates were produced by the North East, South East and South West regions, each of which generated 2 responses (40% of sample).
- 7 out of 9 higher education institutions (HEIs) responded (78% of sample). The response is estimated to be between 12% and 14% of HEIs offering post-compulsory education in England.
- This yielded a combined response rate of 63%.

**2.1 Qualifications offered in FE and HEI:** recipients were asked to list post-compulsory ITE qualifications currently offered by their organisation.

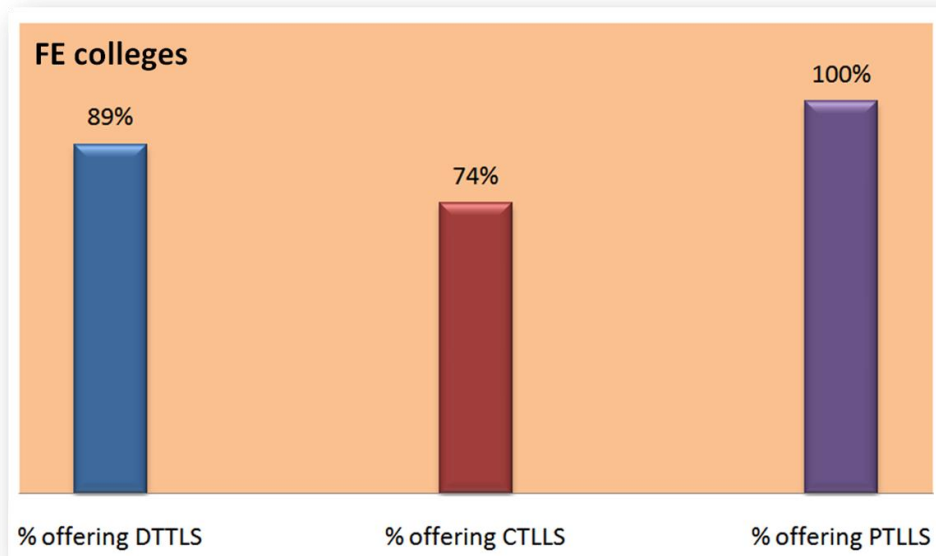


Fig 2.

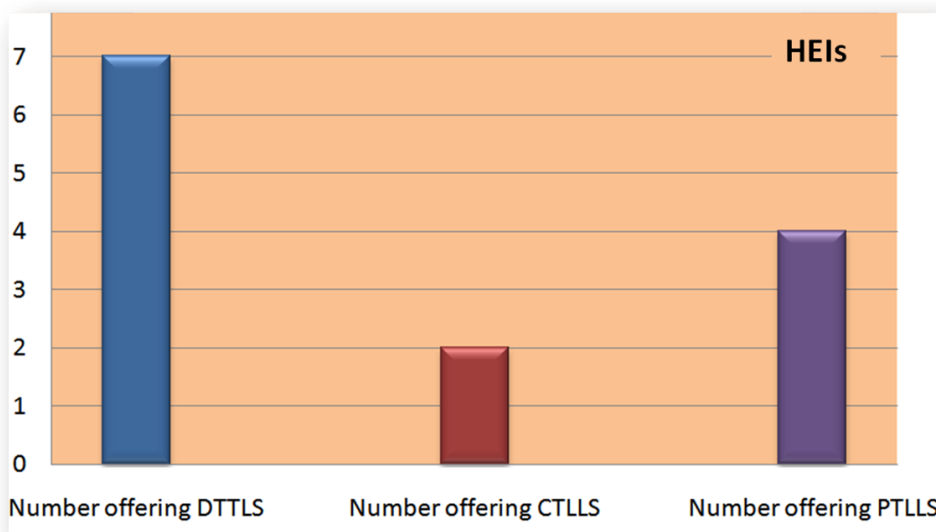


Fig 3.

Figures 1 and 2 show :

- each of the 3 post-compulsory initial teacher education qualifications on the QTLS framework being offered by FE colleges and HEIs
- 89% of FE and all HEI respondents offer DTLLS
- 74% of FE and under a third of HEI respondents offered the CTLLS
- 100% of FE and over half of HEI respondents offer PTLLS

**2.2 Preparing beginning teachers (FE colleges):** the questionnaire asked: *'Does your organisation help ITE/T students to consider the role of education for sustainable development (ESD)?'*

- Across the 9 regions a majority of FE colleges (56%) reported providing no active help to any of their ITE students to consider the role of ESD, although 1 respondent, offering PTLLS and DTLLS wrote, 'not really, unless this appears as a topic in action research projects.'
- Of the FE colleges offering DTLLS or equivalent qualifications, 42% report helping students to consider the role of ESD.
- Of FE colleges offering CTLLS or equivalent qualifications, 30% report helping students to consider the role of ESD.
- 100% of responding FE colleges offers PTLLS. 15% report helping students to consider the role of ESD.
- One respondent stated, 'learners are less interested in becoming ethical practitioners and more interested in studying things to make them better teachers.'

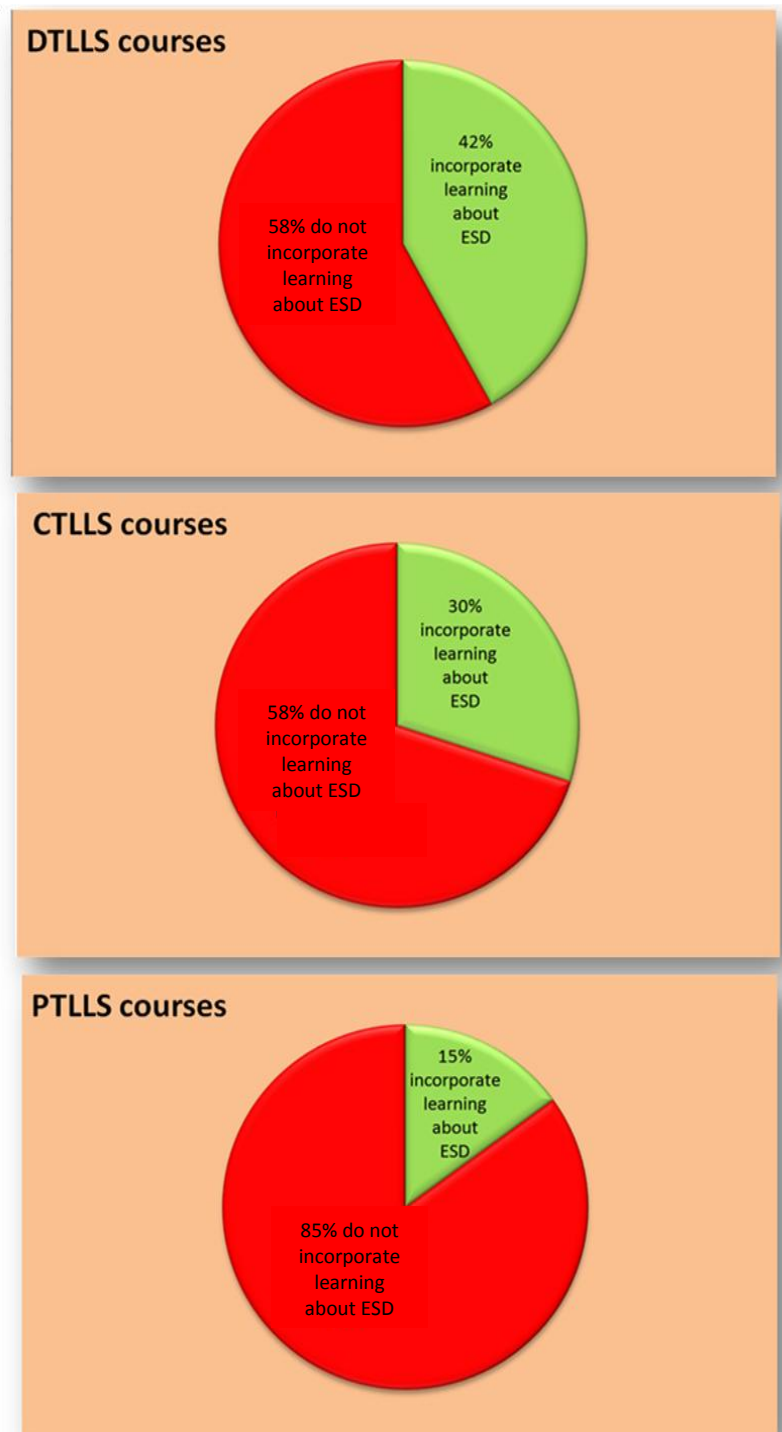


Fig 4.

**2.3 Preparing beginning teachers (HEIs): the questionnaire asked: ‘Does your organisation help ITE/T students to consider the role of education for sustainable development (ESD)?’**

- Over half the HEIs responding indicated that students on their DTLLS courses had some input on ESD.
- None of the 7 HEIs responding reported any input on ESD on their CTLLS or PTLLS courses.

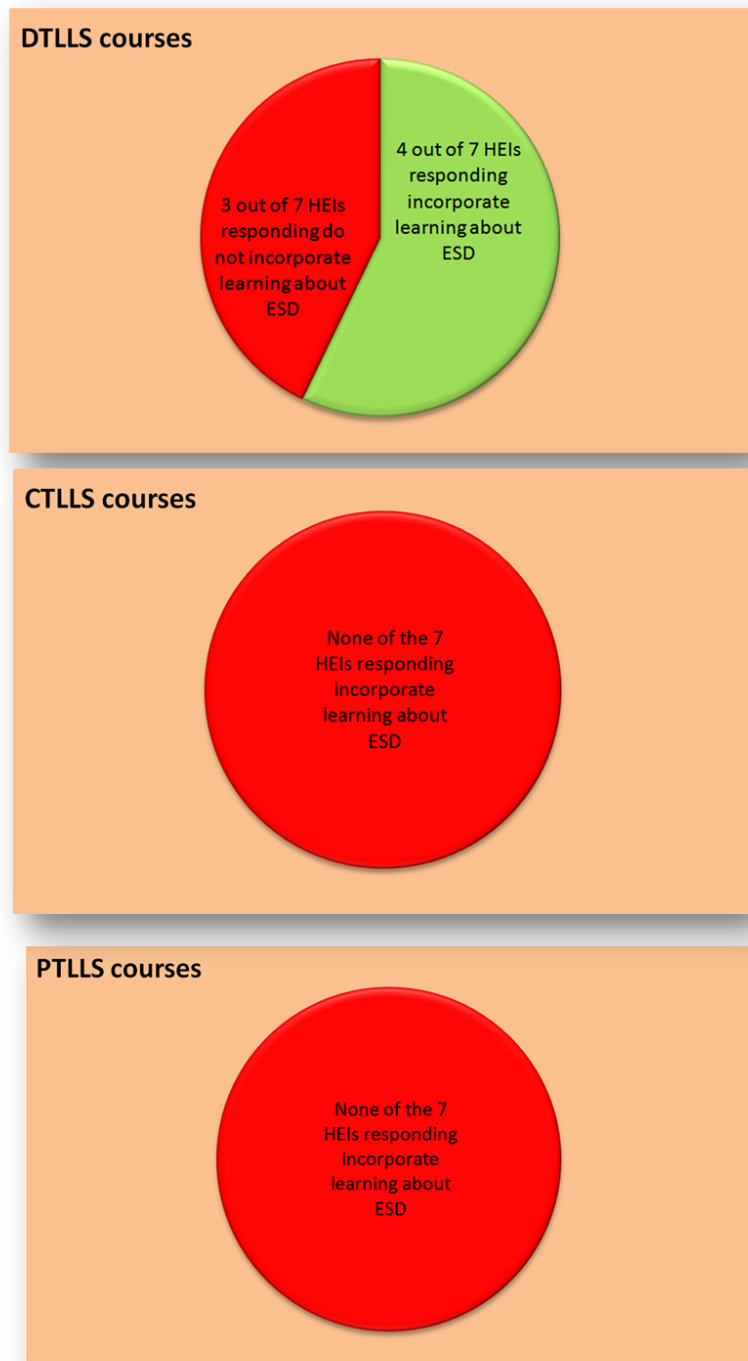


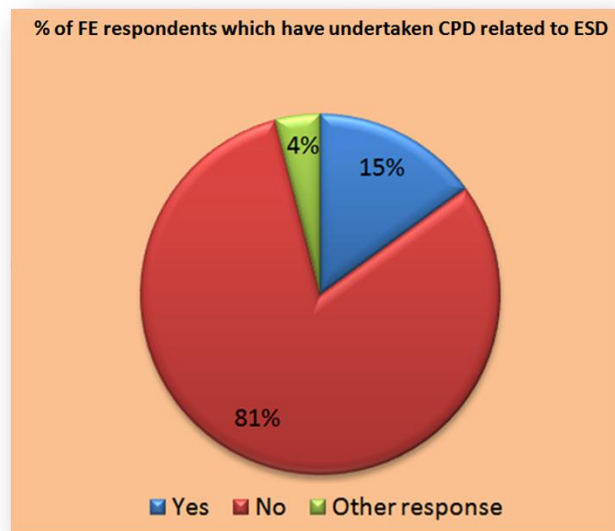
Fig 5.

**3.1 CPD (FE colleges):** The questionnaire asked: *'Have you or any of your colleagues involved in Post-16 ITE/T undertaken CPD related to ESD?'*

- Of the 44% of FE respondents reporting that they do help ITE students to consider the role of ESD, 33% indicated that ITE staff had undertaken related CPD. 67% had not.
- Only 1 of those respondents reporting *not* to help ITE students to consider the role of ESD had undertaken related CPD. And this exception has incorporated SD in 2011/2012 schemes of work for all 3 of its ITE qualifications.

Figure 6 shows that:

- 81% of FE respondents reported no CPD input on ESD for staff involved in post-compulsory ITE
- 15% of FE respondents reported some CPD input on ESD for staff involved in post-compulsory ITE



- 1 respondent noted that no formal CPD was undertaken, 'only personal research – asking schoolteachers what they do and reading.'

Fig 6.

**3.2 CPD (HEIs):** The questionnaire asked: ***‘Have you or any of your colleagues involved in Post-16 ITE/T undertaken CPD related to ESD?’***

- Of the 4 HEI respondents reporting that they do offer help to ITE students to consider the role of ESD, 3 positively indicated that ITE staff had undertaken related CPD, with the fourth noting that this only occurred , ‘through reading publications, journals and government directives.’
- The one other respondent who did not indicate whether or not they or colleagues had undertaken CPD related to ESD stated, ‘This is not a key area of development and is more implied than specific.’
- None of those which do not help ITE students to consider the role of ESD, had undertaken ESD related CPD.

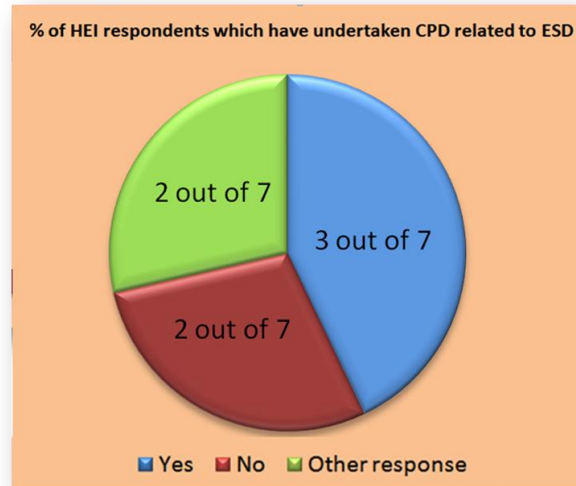


Fig 7.

For a numerical regional breakdown of the statistics on this page, please see appendix 2

**4.1 Appetite for CPD (FE colleges):** the questionnaire asked: ***‘How likely is it that your organisation would welcome CPD for post 16 ITE/T tutors specifically related to ESD?’***

Figure 8 below shows that:

- 63% of FE respondents indicated that they would be likely to welcome ESD- specific CPD for post-16 ITE tutors, with 15% indicating that they would be ‘very likely to do so.’ 1 of this 15% noted: ‘I would have thought that they would view it positively. They (like all educational establishments) have a duty to raise sustainability levels and participation.’ Another added, ‘If they are forced into it’.

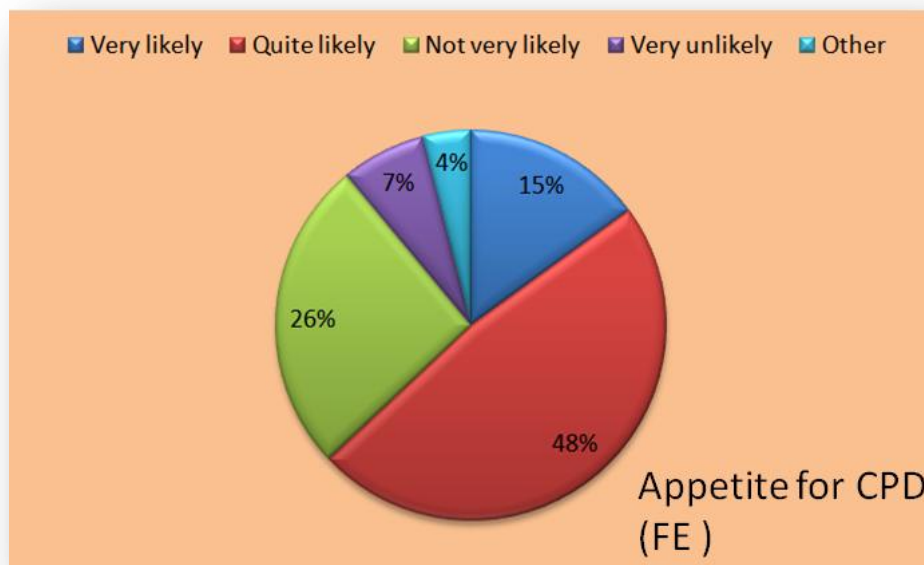


Fig 8.

- 33% of FE respondents indicated that they would be unlikely to welcome ESD- specific CPD for post-16 ITE tutors, with 7% indicating that they would be ‘very unlikely to do so.’
- Of those indicating likeliness to undertake CPD, 69% already offer help to ITE students to consider the role of ESD.
- One college which achieved National Skills Academy for Environmental Technologies status prior to this survey reported, that, ‘There are many concerns competing for the little CPD time available. While ESD will not be a major focus of CPD in 2011/12 we would always welcome well-targeted specific CPD opportunities – 1 day events, briefings, webinars, etc.’

**4.2 Appetite for CPD (HEIs):** The questionnaire asked: *'Have you or any of your colleagues involved in Post-16 ITE/T undertaken CPD related to ESD?'*

- A minority of HEIs indicated that they would welcome CPD for ESD. In FE the figure was 63% in favour.
- None of the HEIs indicated that they would be 'very unlikely' to welcome CPD for ESD. This contrasts with 7% of FE colleges.
- 1 of the 2 indicating that they would be 'very likely' added, 'although, it would depend on whether it provides further development to what we are already doing.'

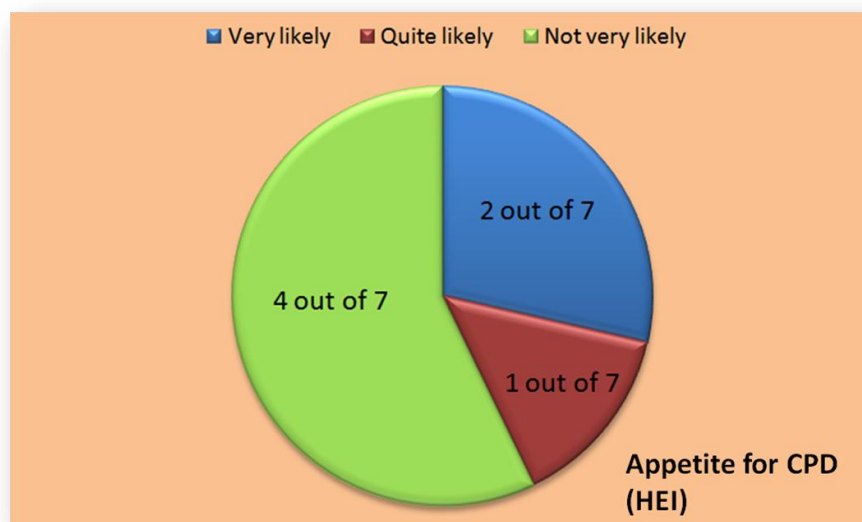


Fig 9.

- The 1 respondent to indicate that they would be 'quite likely', stated, 'yes, this would be a good addition to our whole school training days if the price were competitive.' This university is not currently helping ITE students learn about ESD, nor have its ITE staff undertaken CPD for ESD to date.
- 1 of the 4 indicating that they would 'not be very likely' to welcome CPD for ESD is among those already helping ITE students to learn about ESD. This respondent also indicated that they or colleagues had undertaken CPD for ESD. They identified 3 barriers to their further engagement: funding; agenda congestion; unclear of benefits to beginning teachers.

**5.1 Barriers (FE colleges):** the questionnaire asked: *'If your organisation would be 'not very likely' or 'very unlikely' to welcome ESD specific CPD, what are the key barriers?'*

Respondents were able to check the following reasons and/or to add their own comments:

- Unclear about the benefits to beginning teachers
- Unclear about the benefits of ESD to the post-16 sector
- Agenda congestion
- Funding constraints

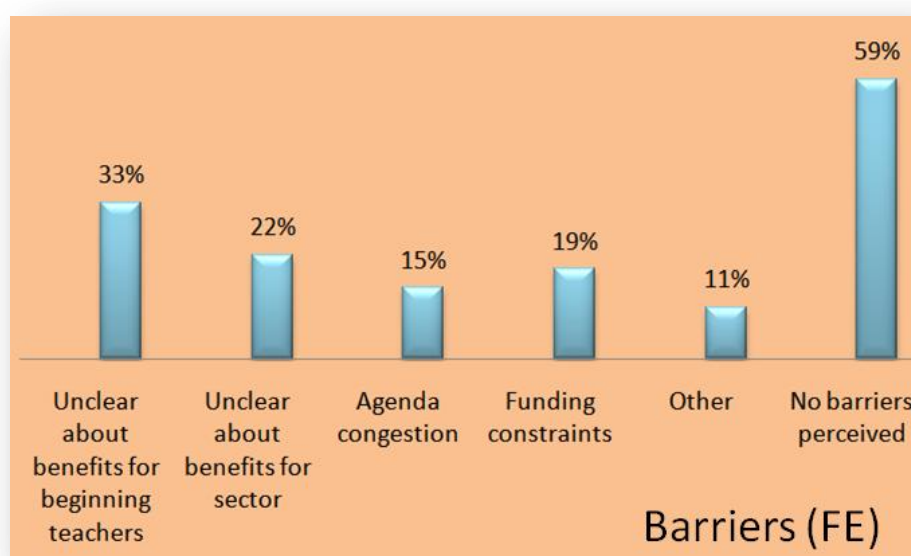


Fig 10.

Figure 10 shows that:

- 1 third of those perceiving barriers were unclear about the benefits for beginning teachers and, more than a fifth were unclear of the benefits for the sector as whole. These barriers outweighed the practical issues of funding constraints and agenda congestion.
- There were 3 'other' responses: 1 from a college which will no longer offer ITE from September 2011; 1 from a lecturer stating, 'Unsure, as it is a large institution and I am not in a management position; and 1 stating, 'If they have to do it, they will do it. Trainee teachers however think that this is just another imposition which will have to be painfully and artificially integrated into their lessons at the expense of teaching the real subject.'

- A majority (59%) of FE college respondents perceived no barriers to CPD in this context. One of these tellingly noted, 'ESD is not linked to the LLUK standards, therefore not currently included as part of any ITE curriculum. However, teachers may wish to embed it in their own curriculum area so may welcome CPD.'
- There were 2 further additional comments from colleges which had both indicated that they would 'be very likely' to welcome CPD for ESD:
  - 'the current DTLLS curriculum is very overweight. If sustainability is included, it really needs to be embedded to avoid swelling the curriculum.'
  - 'They (not specified by the respondent) have ignored it so far since they are still trying to cope with other demands such as ECM'

**5.2 Barriers (HEIs)** the questionnaire asked: *'If your organisation would be 'not very likely' or 'very unlikely' to welcome ESD specific CPD, what are the key barriers?'*

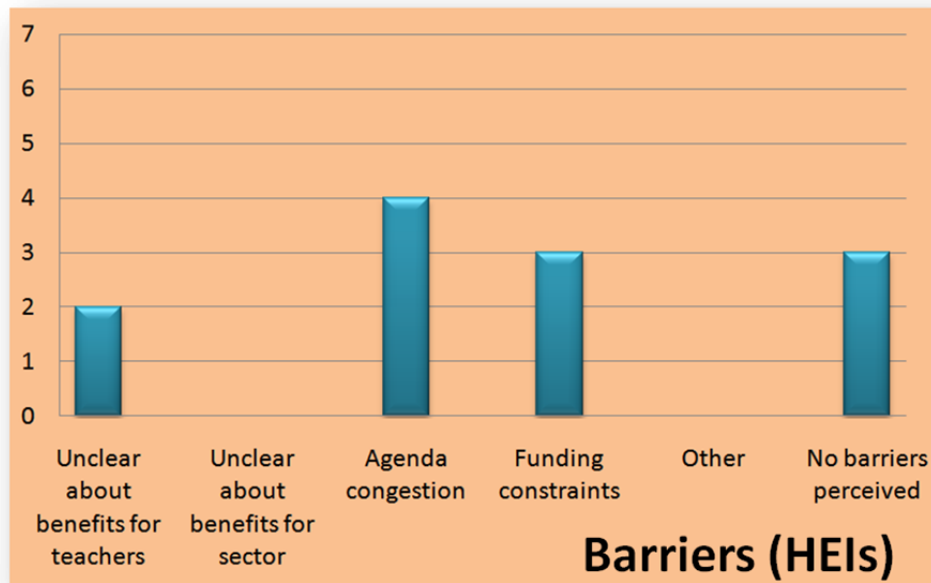


Fig 11.

- None of the 7 responding HEIs stated that they were unclear about the benefits to the sector. This contrasts with 22% of FE respondents.
- 2 of the 7 HEIs were unclear about the benefits to beginning teachers. 1 of these also indicated that:
  - it did help its ITE students learn about ESD
  - it had previously engaged in CPD for ESD
- Agenda congestion and funding constraints were the most frequently identified barriers for HEI. In FE the most frequently reported barriers were lack of clarity about benefits for beginning teachers, and lack of clarity about benefits for the sector.
- One of the respondents referring to agenda congestion wrote, 'This topic seems to be more related to specific curriculum subjects. Teachers of those subjects will include it anyway and others will not see any scope for it.'

## Comments and conclusions

The survey has revealed that there is a minority of providers for which ESD is recognised as an important ITE issue. In seemingly rare instances it is the subject of very thoughtful consideration; 1 HEI respondent volunteered:

‘I undertook a research project to embed ESD within our DTLLS programme with my team – we have developed lesson plans and resources to embed within each of our core modules, as well as an Enhancement Module to explore ESD further.’

And 1 FE college took the opportunity to comment on the prominence of sustainable development in its 2011-2013 strategic plan, and the existence of a:

‘Centre for Sustainability, a cross College Centre which is specialist, outward facing and leads innovative practice and delivery in this area. This Centre acts as a Hub for:

- Encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration
- Stimulating innovative course and programme development
- Staff enrichment and development
- Resource centre for professionals, business, industry, education and the local community
- Building closer ties with our diverse communities
- Enhancing student opportunities for example, internships’

This response provided an isolated reference to wider strategic concerns. And the observation of one HEI that, ‘This topic seems to be more related to specific curriculum subjects. Teachers of those subjects will include it anyway and others will not see any scope for it’, suggests that SD is not universally understood to be an interdisciplinary, cross cutting concern. This may go some way to explaining its absence from much of the provision surveyed in this study.

A further factor appears to be the exclusion of SD/ESD from the standards and qualifications for lifelong learning. 1 college volunteered the information that:

‘ESD is not linked to the LLUK standards,, therefore not currently included as part of any ITE curriculum. However, teachers may wish to embed it in their own curriculum area so may welcome CPD.’

This suggests, perhaps, a small step forward from the position identified by FE sector research into leadership for sustainable development

conducted in 2007 by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, Forum for the Future and London South Bank University: ‘Some participants did not demonstrate the confidence to take the agenda forward without further “permission” from regulatory, qualifications or inspectorial bodies.’<sup>4</sup>

The issue of agenda congestion, identified as a barrier by 15% of FE Colleges and by 4 out of 7 HEIs, could be mitigated by the inclusion of ESD in ITE standards. As another FE respondent observed:

‘One of the things to bear in mind, is that the current DTLLS curriculum is very overweight. In addition to the 9 units, that amounts to 136 assessment criteria, the students have to take the Minimum Core on board (78 pages) and the Professional Standards – which lists 68 behavioural elements alone.’

Nonetheless, this same respondent proposed a solution with potential to address both the challenge of agenda congestion and the failure to grasp the interdisciplinary nature of SD/ESD:

If sustainability is included, it really needs to be embedded to avoid swelling the curriculum.’

In the last few years the FE sector has made significant progress in stepping up to the sustainability challenge. We believe that a concerted effort to embed sustainability within post-compulsory ITE provision must be the next step on that vital journey.

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<sup>4</sup> *Leadership for Sustainability: Making sustainable development a reality for leaders*, CEL, 2007

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks are due to colleagues at the following organisations for their generous participation:

Accrington & Rossendale College  
Barnfield College  
Barnsley College  
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Castle College, Nottingham  
City Lit  
Colchester Institute  
Cornwall College  
Derwentside College  
Gloucestershire College  
Highbury College  
Huntingdonshire Regional College  
Institute of Education  
Middlesborough College  
Newcastle-Under-Lyme College  
North Nottinghamshire College  
Northampton College  
Northumbria University  
Nottingham Trent University  
Peterborough Regional College  
Sandwell College  
South Essex College  
South Staffordshire College  
Suffolk New College  
Sussex Coast College  
The Oldham College  
Tower Hamlets College  
University of Central Lancashire  
University of Huddersfield  
University of Plymouth  
Wakefield College  
Westminster Kingsway College  
Wigan & Leigh College  
York College

## Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire

Dear

As part of its three year DfID funded project to promote sustainable development in the FE curriculum, Lancashire Global Education Centre (LGEC) is researching the role of education for sustainable development in post-16 initial teacher education and training.

We would be really grateful if you could spare around 5 minutes to answer the following in-line questions on this theme. Answers can be submitted as a return email to [nigel@magnifiedlearning.com](mailto:nigel@magnifiedlearning.com), where they will be processed on behalf of LGEC. Respondents' identities will not be publically linked to data unless permission is explicitly granted.

For further information on LGEC's FE Sustainable Development project, please visit: <http://lgec.org.uk/Resource-Centre/Sustainable-Development-and-Further-Education>

Thanks in advance

Vicky Hutchinson  
Further Education Co ordinator

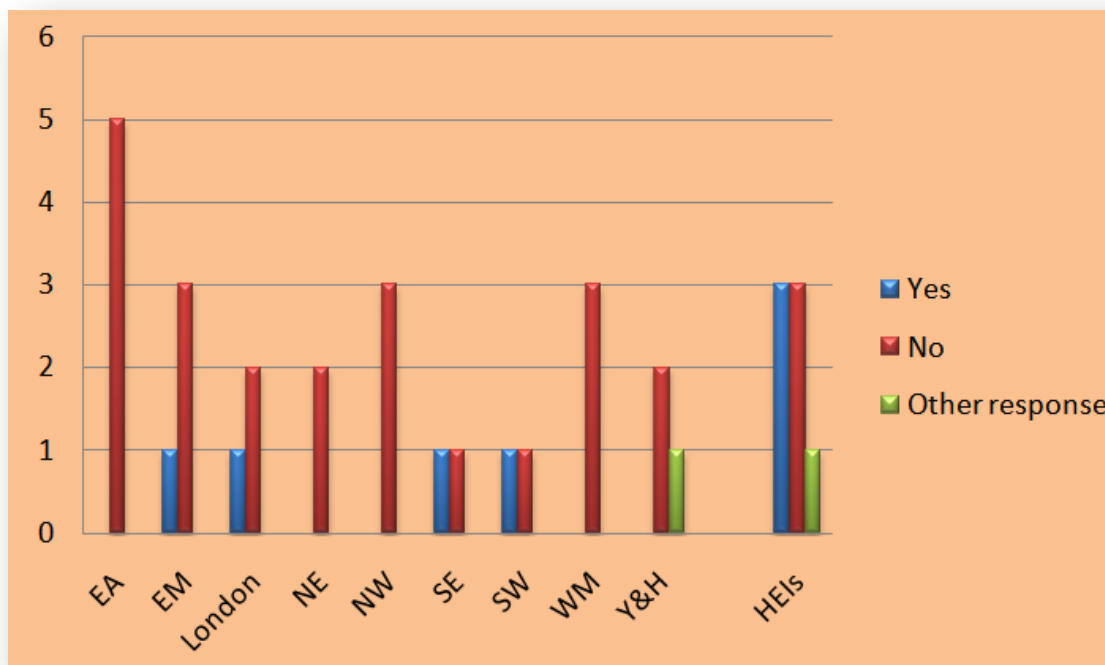
- 
- Q1. Name and post-title of respondent
- Q2. Name of organisation
- Q3. In terms of initial teacher education/training, are you:  
an awarding institution  a provider  both ?
- Q4. Does your organisation's offer include (tick all that apply):  
DTLLS  CTLLS  PTLLS ?
- Q5. Does your organisation help ITE/T students to consider the role of education for sustainable Development (ESD) in any of the following (tick all that apply)?  
DTLLS  CTLLS  PTLLS ?
- Q6. Have you or any of your colleagues involved in Post-16 ITE/T undertaken CPD related to ESD?
- Q7. How likely is it that your organisation would welcome CPD for post 16 ITE/T tutors specifically related to ESD?  
Very likely  quite likely  not very likely  very unlikely
- Q8. If your organisation would be 'not very likely' or 'very unlikely' to welcome ESD specific CPD, what are the key barriers? Tick all that apply:
- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Unclear about the benefits to beginning teachers        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unclear about the benefits of ESD to the post-16 sector | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Agenda congestion                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Funding constraints                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- Other (please feel free to add your own comments).
- Q9. Please tick if you would be prepared to take part in further related research
- We would like to keep you informed about the Sustainable Skills Project. Please tick here if you would rather not receive further information . Many thanks for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

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Footnote

PTLLS – Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector  
CTLLS – Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector  
DTLLS – Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector

**Appendix 2: Have you or any of your colleagues involved in Post-16 ITE/T undertaken CPD related to ESD?’ – Numerical breakdown by region.**



**References**

**Regional audits:**

- *Sustainable Development in London’s Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges*, LSX and LSN, 2007;
- *Sustainable Development Activity Interests and Needs in Further Education Colleges - The East Midlands Baseline Survey*, University of Leicester and EMFEC, 2007
- *Audit of Sustainable Development Activity in the South East*, LSC SE, 2008
- *The East of England Sustainable Development Baseline Survey*, LSC EoE, 2008 [unpublished]
- *The Journey to Sustainable College: South West Analysis and Summary Research Undertaken 2008*, AOC SW, 2008