

# THE FALMOUTH CURRICULUM LADDER: A CURRICULUM-LED EMBEDDING STRATEGY FOR CLIMATE EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

**Falmouth University has created, and continue to evaluate, a novel evidence-informed strategy for embedding climate education through the sustainability strategy at scale across the curriculum.**

Climate education forms a central part of Falmouth University's new approach to embed sustainability into the curriculum in an effective and authentic manner, driven by the belief that the greatest impact we can make as a higher education institution is to positively inform, educate and inspire students on the importance of environmental and social responsibility, as both future professionals and global citizens. To successfully embed climate education and sustainability into the curriculum, Falmouth have created a bespoke tool and method that will enable, encourage, and illustrate sustainability embeddedness across all courses and levels of study, over the coming four years.

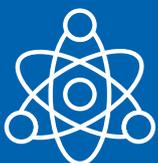
Falmouth University has created the 'Falmouth Curriculum Ladder' (FCL) tool and an associated methodology to be used to embed climate education and broader sustainability themes across the entire curriculum. Key themes that focus on climate include the climate and ecological crises, interrelationships and interdependence, and regenerative systems. The background drivers to

creating this tool include the belief that educating their students in the climate crisis and sustainability is the most important thing they can do as a University; previously-agreed 'Sustainability Learning Outcomes' for levels four to six (in 2020); the commencement of a transformational curriculum reform project from September 2022, which can act as a vehicle to deliver; plus the realisation that climate education already exists across Falmouth's curriculum in various levels and quality, stemming from independent, 'grass-roots' action.

Falmouth carried out a successful initial consultation process surrounding the creation of the FCL and accompanying approach, involving learning and teaching leads, the Sustainability Team, and academics already delivering climate or sustainability education, followed by a trial of the FCL tool and approach at their annual training week for academics. In addition, initial student feedback was obtained on the FCL's design in terms of what key climate and sustainability principles it should highlight and prioritise.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **An approach to embedding climate literacy** into the curriculum should educate academics through its design; enable efforts to be reviewed; and provide a framework that recognises and embraces current efforts, whilst enabling an expansion across new areas of the curriculum.
- **Staff and student consultation** and collaboration should be a central part of any approach seeking to progress an institution's climate education agenda, as it will lead to a higher quality end-product that the university community feel more included in and enthused about.
- **A wider sustainability focus should be considered** in any approach seeking to drive expansion in climate education, given the links between the climate and ecological crisis, the need for greater circularity and regeneration, and the possibility of tackling wider sustainability issues through climate education.

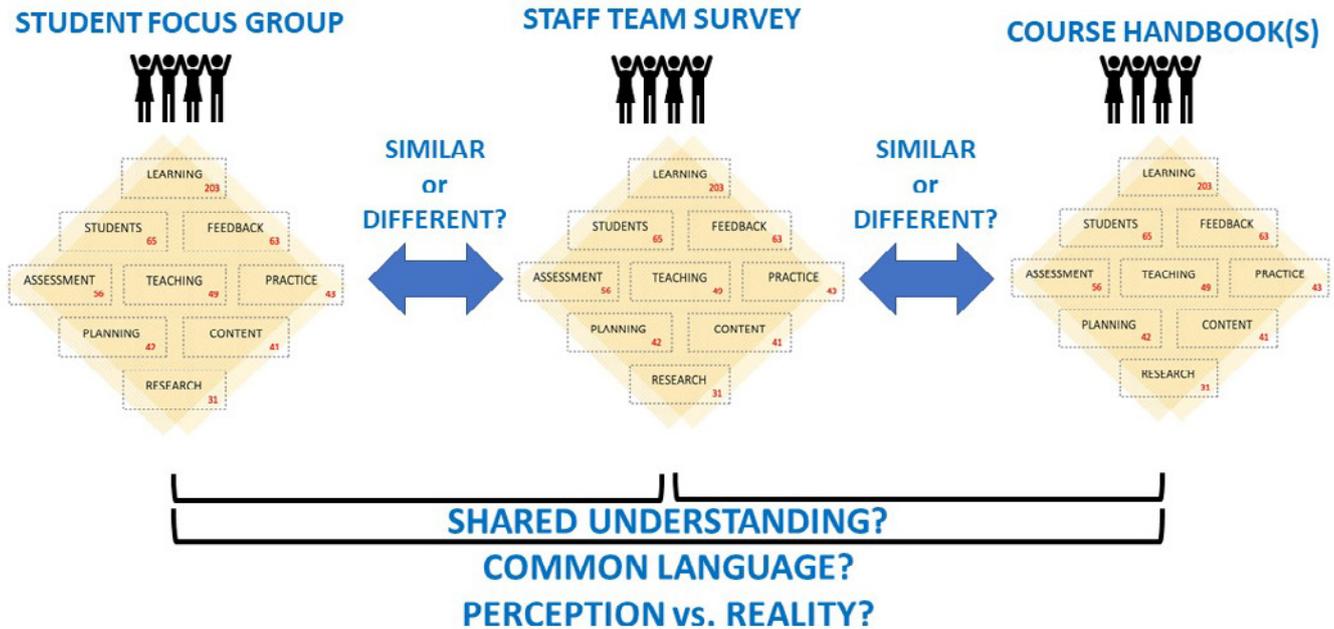


**"An approach to embedding climate literacy and sustainability into the curriculum should do three things: educate academics through its design; enable efforts to be visualised and reviewed; and provide a framework that recognises and embraces current efforts."**

**Authors:** Jake Causley and Russell Crawford, Falmouth University, and Oliver Milliner, FX Plus.

The main outcomes of Falmouth's effort in this area were:

- As an activity to help academics reform their teaching, to incorporate climate education and sustainability, and subsequently as a resource to illustrate their considerations within their course content.
- As the basis of a detailed textual analysis approach to review efforts to embed climate education and sustainability across the curriculum, allowing Falmouth to determine and generate thresholds for embeddedness and identify and engage with departments falling short.
- As an activity completed by students, and resultant resource to help paint a picture of market demand surrounding climate education and sustainability, to further create and refine a shared dialogue and understanding of this across courses, their documentation, and the campus community.



**Image:** Falmouth Curriculum Ladder Concept Methodology.

The FCL in design is comprised of several key sustainability themes and phrases. First and foremost, these will be used to create a common language and understanding of climate education and sustainability at the institution, and further the FCL will help academics reform their teaching, re-design course handbooks, gauge student opinions, and ensure alignment with each other.

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## KEY FACTS ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

<b>Institution name</b>	Falmouth University
<b>Location</b>	Falmouth, England
<b>Number of students (total for institution)</b>	4,699
<b>Number of staff (total for institution)</b>	1,142
<b>Campus type</b>	Split location (one, smaller campus in Falmouth, and a larger one just outside of the small, neighbouring town of Penryn)

## KEY FACTS ABOUT THE CASE STUDY

<b>University or department led:</b>	University
<b>Number of staff engaged:</b>	Ca. 95
<b>Number of students engaged:</b>	So far, a few as part of a focus group to test the approach. More students will be involved as the process continues.
<b>Credit-bearing:</b>	Credit-bearing (sustainability principles will be embedded within already credited modules).
<b>Mandatory or optional:</b>	Mandatory (it will be)
<b>External partners:</b>	N/A
<b>Engagement approach used:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Creation of a bespoke, academic-focused tool, and accompanying task or activity</li><li>- Release of said tool and task to academics on an individual basis, targeting course leaders</li><li>- Encouragement of collaboration within departments</li></ul>

**Project team:** [Jake Causley](#), Falmouth University, [Russell Crawford](#), Falmouth University, [Oliver Milliner](#), FX Plus

**More info:** [Falmouth University Annual Sustainability Report 2020](#)  
[Falmouth Curriculum Ladder Concept Presentation](#)

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## HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER

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