AC 8: Campus as a Living Laboratory

4 points available

A. Credit Rationale
This credit recognizes institutions that utilize their infrastructure and operations as living environments for multidisciplinary learning, applied research and practical work that advances sustainability on campus. Students that actively participate in making their campuses more sustainable are well prepared to continue that work in their careers and communities after graduation.

B. Criteria
Institution is utilizing its infrastructure and operations for multidisciplinary student learning, applied research and/or practical work that advances sustainability on campus in at least one of the following areas:

- Air & Climate
- Buildings
- Dining Services/Food
- Energy
- Grounds
- Purchasing
- Transportation
- Waste
- Water
- Coordination, Planning & Governance
- Diversity & Affordability
- Health, Wellbeing & Work
- Investment
- Public Engagement
- Other

This credit includes substantive work (e.g. class projects, thesis projects, term papers, published papers) that involves active and experiential learning and contributes to positive sustainability outcomes on campus (see Credit Example, below). On-campus internships and non-credit work (e.g. that take place under supervision of sustainability staff or committees) may count as long as the work has an academic component (i.e. is not solely physical labor).

This credit does not include immersive education programs, co-curricular activities, or community-based work, which are covered by AC 5: Immersive Experience, credits in the Campus Engagement subcategory, and credits in the Public Engagement subcategory, respectively.

C. Applicability
This credit applies to all institutions where students attend the physical campus.

D. Scoring
Institutions earn 0.4 points for each area covered, regardless of how many projects there are in each area. Institutions with projects that cover 10 or more areas earn the maximum of 4 points available for this credit.
E. Reporting Fields

Required

□ An indication of whether the institution is utilizing its campus as a living laboratory in the following areas:
  o Air & Climate
  o Buildings
  o Dining Services/Food
  o Energy
  o Grounds
  o Purchasing
  o Transportation
  o Waste
  o Water
  o Coordination, Planning & Governance
  o Diversity & Affordability
  o Health, Wellbeing & Work
  o Investment
  o Public Engagement
  o Other (please specify)

□ An affirmation that the submitted information is accurate to the best of a responsible party’s knowledge and contact information for the responsible party. The responsible party should be a staff member, faculty member, or administrator who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public.

Conditional

Required for each area for which the institution is reporting student learning, applied research or practical work:

□ A brief description of the student work and positive outcomes

Optional

□ The website URL where information about the institution’s campus as a living laboratory program or projects is available

□ Notes about the submission

F. Measurement

Timeframe

Projects and work conducted within the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission are eligible for this credit.

Sampling and Data Standards

Not applicable
Credit Example: Campus as a Living Laboratory

Example University utilizes its infrastructure and operations for multidisciplinary student learning, applied research and practical work that advances sustainability on campus in the following ways:

- A student completed a capstone project evaluating local carbon offset opportunities for the university. (Air & Climate)
- Students living in LEED-certified housing used and developed “smart home” technologies as part of an independent study course. (Buildings)
- A student spent the summer interning with Physical Plant Continuous Commissioning Engineers surveying rooms in selected buildings, providing research and documentation on occupancy sensors, coordinating with lighting projects and developing installations packages that resulted in measurable energy savings. (Energy)
- As a class project, students developed a business plan for a student-governed food cooperative. (Dining Services/Food)
- A group of students conducted a semester-long project to analyze the application of clean and renewable energy on campus. (Energy)
- Students participated in a year-long study to catalog insect species found on campus. The results were used to inform the university’s integrated pest management program. (Grounds)
- A class completed a Life Cycle Assessment on university vendor practices. (Purchasing)
- A student developed and helped implement a proposal to install bicycle repair stations on campus as the capstone project of an independent study course. (Transportation)
- Students participated in the U.S. EPA Food Recovery Challenge and achieved measurable reductions in campus food waste. (Waste)
- Environmental Studies students constructed a water budget for the campus based on rainfall, evapo-transpiration rate, groundwater availability and other factors. The budget is used to inform campus water conservation strategies and goals. (Water)
- A class conducted a qualitative survey of local community members affected by a proposed campus expansion and presented the results to administrators. (Public Engagement)
- A planning student completed a thesis outlining a smart growth model for the campus. (Coordination, Planning & Governance)
- Sociology students conducted a survey of gender neutral facilities on campus and delivered recommendations to administrators. (Diversity & Affordability)
- An MD candidate studied health risks associated with pesticide use on campus. (Health, Wellbeing & Work)
- Students in an economics course worked with faculty members to complete a wage study comparing the compensation of university employees with the local cost of living. (Health, Wellbeing & Work)
- Students published a paper detailing the university’s investments in companies that practice and support hydraulic fracking. (Investment)
- An art student’s thesis project examined the role of the creative and performing arts in communicating sustainability and culminated in a campus project to inspire behavior change. (Other)