

UCCS Compass Curriculum Frequently asked Questions about Sustainability Courses¹

What is a Sustainability course?

A definition of Sustainability:

Given that humans have significant impact on the Earth's natural support systems it is important that students at UCCS understand implications of those impacts.

- Sustainability can be defined as the use of resources in a way that those resources will be available for everyone today and for future generations.
- Commonly, sustainability is viewed through the lens of the interaction between human development and the natural environment.
- Just as importantly, aspects of Sustainability such as social equity, environmental protection, and economic development are part of the definition of Sustainability.

Examples of topics that can be addressed in a Sustainability course:

- Each subset of Sustainability flagged courses must address the interaction of humans with the environment with the goal of making the Earth a long-term viable support system for its inhabitants.
- Examples of approaches to social equity would be discussions of equitable access to essential resources for all people or the exposure of some groups of population to higher levels of pollutants.
- Examples of approaches to environmental protection would include examinations of the physical systems like climate that support humans and the impact that humans have on those systems.
- Examples of economic development would include a discussion of the economic inequalities that affect human use of environmental systems and the commodification of ecosystem functions.
- Classes that cover these topics can be found in a variety of disciplines throughout the campus since sustainability cuts across all types of human endeavors.

How do Sustainability courses fit into the new Compass Curriculum?

- Classes designated/flagged as Sustainability courses may also be designated in another category or more in the Compass Curriculum.
- It is expected that the topic of sustainability will be integrated into the broader topics addressed by the class.
- Sustainability courses may be integrated into courses within students' majors.

How do I designate my course as a Sustainability course?

In order to designate your course as a Sustainability course, visit the Compass Curriculum portal on the UCCS Provost website (<http://www.uccs.edu/~provost/>). Follow the link to the Sustainability course submission form, and then provide brief responses to the questions on the form. *Completing the form generally takes less than 15 minutes.*

What resources are available to faculty who want to designate their courses as a Sustainability course?

Faculty Support: The campus offers a minor in sustainable development (<http://www.uccs.edu/~sustainabilityminor/>). Faculty members who are involved this minor are a good resource for ideas in implementing sustainability classes.

Office of Sustainability: This UCCS office offers support (<http://www.uccs.edu/~sustain/>) for practical applications of sustainable practice. The staff implements a variety sustainability programs on campus as are a good resource.

Conferences: At UCCS and in the region several activities are supported by organizations that allow participants to learn more about issues related to sustainability. An example of a conference like this the Knapsack Institute held on the UCCS campus every summer. This conference addresses inequality issues that are a common theme in sustainability.

¹ **More questions?**

Contact Steve Jennings, Chair of Compass Curriculum Sustainability Subcommittee, at sjennings@uccs.edu or 4056.