

Vision for STARS 3.0

Approved by the STARS Steering Committee November 20, 2019

Version 3.0 will be the second major revision of STARS. According to the [STARS Technical Development Policy](#), any change is possible in a major revision. Examples of changes that could be considered include:

- Restructuring the way STARS is organized
- Changing how points are allocated
- Adding, deleting or changing the criteria of many credits
- Changing how overall scores are calculated, rating levels, etc.
- Adding new participation requirements

This vision is intended to guide the development of the new version, with the process expected to take at least two years. The actions listed in association with each goal are still under development. Later in the process, a complete draft version of STARS 3.0 will be circulated for public comment.

Overall Vision

STARS 3.0 will provide a standardized, comprehensive and user-friendly platform for sustainability assessment and reporting that inspires urgent and transformative action by higher education institutions to create an ecologically healthy and socially just world.

Goals

- 1) Promote a comprehensive and inclusive vision of higher education sustainability.

Actions

- Look for opportunities to better align STARS reporting to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Strengthen indicators related to equity, access, and social justice.

2) Make STARS more accessible, especially to under-resourced institutions.

Actions

- Eliminate any reporting requirements that are duplicative or non-critical.
- Consider using rubrics to assess aspects of sustainability that are not easily measurable or for which quantitative indicators are overly labor-intensive.¹
- Identify important foundational aspects of an effective sustainability program to help new participants prioritize.

3) Ensure that all institutions continue to have meaningful goals to strive towards and be recognized for.

Action

- Ensure that participants at all levels are both recognized for their achievements and challenged to continuously improve (e.g., through badges or a new rating level).

4) Ensure that STARS is useful and relevant in diverse contexts.

Actions

- Use applicability when appropriate to better allow each institution to report on only those credits that are relevant to its specific context.

¹ For reference, here is an [example of a potential rubric](#).

- Look for additional ways to use contextual variability to weight credits more appropriately for each institution based on their relative impact.
- In considering changes, ensure that indicators are relevant to higher education institutions worldwide, including minority-serving institutions, special focus institutions and other institution types and contexts that are underserved by STARS.
- Explore integrating exemplary practices and open-ended innovations into the main body of STARS to make their connections to standard credits more visible.²

5) Continue to prioritize performance over process.

Action

- Base scoring on performance metrics where practical, or else the best available combination of leading and lagging indicators.
- Strive to allocate points based on the sustainability impact of fully achieving each credit and indicator relative to other credits and indicators.

6) Maintain a consistent set of metrics that allows participants to track progress over time.

Action

- When proposing or making changes, consider the impact of potential breaks in continuity on participants and the usefulness of the existing dataset.

7) Allow participants to publish new information without requiring a full submission.

Action

² For example, the optional Sustainable Dining Certification credit could be relocated from Innovation & Leadership to Food & Dining and still remain an optional bonus credit.

- Explore mechanisms to better facilitate annual or dynamic reporting, while still documenting the information on which ratings and third party rankings are based.