EN 5: Civic Engagement

Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that support student civic engagement, employee community service, and public policies that help advance sustainability. The sense of compassion and social solidarity that civic engagement helps to engender are fundamental to achieving sustainability. In addition, civic engagement can help students develop leadership skills while deepening their understanding of practical, real-world problems. Given the prominence and importance of colleges and universities as anchor institutions in their communities, they can also play a crucial supporting role in public sustainability initiatives and serve as powerful voices in advancing sustainability through legislation and policy.

Applicability

Applicable to all institutions.

Points available

A maximum of 8 points are available for this credit.

Criteria

5.1 Percentage of students that participate in civic engagement programs

An institution earns 4 points when it has evidence that 50 percent or more of its students participate annually in community service and/or other **civic engagement** programs sponsored by the institution. Partial points are available and earned as outlined in Table I.

Table I. Points earned for indicator 5.1

Percentage of students that participate in community service and/or other civic engagement programs	Points earned
50 to 100	4
25 to 49	2
10 to 24	1
1 to 9	0.5

Measurement

Report on the most recent annual data available from within the previous three years.

Participation may be evidenced by enrolling in a service learning program, attending a community service event or activity, or an equivalent action. Neither the passive consumption of information nor awareness of civic engagement opportunities qualifies. Programs and activities sponsored by entities of which the institution is part (e.g., government or university system) may be included as long as the institution actively participates in them.

An institution may take one of three approaches in pursuing this indicator:

A. Survey or assessment results. Report the results of an institution-wide survey or sustainability culture assessment that includes one or more items on student participation in the institution's civic engagement activities. To avail of this option, the survey or assessment results must be indicative of the entire population of students, as ensured through **representative sampling** or by making the assessment mandatory.

B. Direct tracking of participation. Report on the participation figures collected for the community service activity that has the highest participation rate (e.g., program enrollment or event attendance). The figures for two or more activities may be aggregated if the potential for double-counting (counting the same individual more than once because they participate in more than one activity) is minimal (e.g., if there are separate activities for undergraduate and graduate students).

C. Conservative estimate based on mixed/limited data sources. Report on the most credible sources of data that are available, taking steps to minimize double-counting. For example, an institution may use the single best data source for undergraduate students (e.g., enrollment in a service learning program) and the single best data source for graduate students (e.g., attendance at a community service event) and/or adjust figures downward to account for the anticipated extent to which individuals may be counted more than once.

When using limited data sources, do not report a higher percentage range than is credibly supported by the data. Similarly, survey or assessment results may not be extrapolated to a larger population in the absence of representative sampling. For example, the results of a survey of 100 graduate students enrolled in a specific program may only be used to establish the participation status of those individuals; they may not be used to report on the entire population of graduate students.

Documentation

Report the following information in the online Reporting Tool.

- Does the institution have one or more programs to support student civic engagement? (required). For example, a community service, community-based learning, service learning, social entrepreneurship, or social innovation program.

  If Yes, the following four fields are also required:

  - Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution's civic engagement programs for students

- ○ Percentage of students that participate in community service and/or other civic engagement programs
  - ■ 50 to 100
  - ■ 25 to 49
  - ■ 10 to 24
  - ■ 1 to 9
  - ■ Unknown (data not available)

- ○ Approach used to determine the percentage of students that participate in civic engagement programs
  - ■ Direct tracking of participation
  - ■ Survey/assessment results
  - ■ Conservative estimate based on mixed/limited data sources

- ○ Narrative outlining how student participation in civic engagement programs was determined. Include the specific data sources and results used, a description of how a representative sample was reached or double-counting was avoided or minimized (if applicable), and any assumptions used and/or data sources excluded in arriving at the percentage range.

5.2 Employee community service program

An institution earns 1 point when it A) has one or more programs designed to support employee community service and B) supports employee volunteering during regular work hours, for example by offering paid time off for volunteering or by sponsoring an organized service event for which employees are compensated. Partial points are available and earned as outlined in Table II.

Table II. Points earned for indicator 7.2

Criterion	Points available	Points earned
A. Institution has one or more programs designed to support employee community service.	0.5	
B. Institution supports employee volunteering during regular work hours.	0.5	
Total points earned →		

Measurement

Report on the current status of the institution's employee community service programs. Programs sponsored by entities of which the institution is part (e.g., government or university system) qualify as long as the institution actively participates in them. Charitable donations such as workplace giving programs do not qualify.

Documentation

Report the following information in the online Reporting Tool.

- Does the institution have one or more programs designed to support employee community service? (required). For example, an organized service event, community service awards or incentives program, or paid time off for volunteering program.

  If Yes, the following field is also required:

    - Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution's programs to support employee community service

- Does the institution support employee volunteering during regular work hours? (required). For example, by offering paid time off for volunteering or by sponsoring an organized service event for which employees are compensated.

  If Yes, the following field is also required:

    - Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution's support for community volunteering during regular work hours

5.3 Support for public policies to advance sustainability

An institution earns 3 points when A) one or more individuals affiliated with the institution have helped develop **public policies** that address **sustainability challenges** during the previous three years and B) the institution has advocated for public policies to advance sustainability during the previous three years. Partial points are available and earned as outlined in Table III.

Table III. Points earned for indicator 7.3

Criterion	Points available	Points earned
A. One or more individuals affiliated with the institution have helped develop public policies that address sustainability challenges during the previous three years.	1	
B. Institution has advocated for public policies to advance sustainability during the previous three years.	2	
Total points earned →		

Measurement

Report on policy development and advocacy efforts from within the previous three years.

To qualify, policy advocacy may occur at any level (e.g., municipal, local/regional, national, or international), but must be conducted by individuals in their official roles as representatives of the institution. For example, an individual, office, or governing body making a public statement on behalf of the institution in support of legislation would qualify, whereas an individual acting in a personal capacity would not. Advocacy efforts that are made exclusively to advance the institution's interests or projects do not qualify. For example, advocating for government funding for campus sustainability

may be counted, however lobbying for the institution to receive funds that have already been appropriated may not.

Documentation

Report the following information in the online Reporting Tool.

- Have one or more individuals affiliated with the institution helped develop public policies that address sustainability challenges within the previous three years? (required). For example, through shared expertise or technical support.

  If Yes, at least one of the following two fields is also required:

  - Narrative outlining how individuals affiliated with the institution have helped develop local or regional public policies that address sustainability challenges

  - Narrative outlining how individuals affiliated with the institution have helped develop national or international public policies that address sustainability challenges

- Has the institution advocated for public policies to advance sustainability during the previous three years? (required). For example, through publicly supporting, endorsing, or lobbying for legislation, ordinances, and governmental policies that address sustainability challenges.

  If Yes, the following field and at least one form of public evidence (document or online resource) from within the previous three years are also required:

  - Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution's advocacy for public policies to advance sustainability

  - Documentary evidence of the institution's advocacy for public policies to advance sustainability. Upload. For example, a transcript of comments from a public meeting or a press release.

  - Online resource that provides evidence of the institution's advocacy for public policies to advance sustainability. Website URL. For example, an open letter, published op-ed, or blog post.

Glossary

Civic engagement – The ways in which citizens and institutions participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future. Civic engagement activities include community service, service learning, political involvement, and collective action for social change.

Public policies – Laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives. [Adapted from Supporting Public Policy Making Through Policy Analysis and Policy Learning (European Training Foundation, 2015).]

Representative sample – A subset of a statistical population that accurately reflects the members of the entire population. A representative sample should be an unbiased indication of what the entire

population is like. For example, in a student population of 1000 students in which 25 percent of the students are enrolled in a business school, 50 percent are enrolled in humanities programs, and 25 percent are enrolled in science programs, a representative sample might include 200 students: 50 business students, 100 humanities students, and 50 science students. Likewise, a representative sample of purchases should accurately reflect the institution's total purchases, accounting for seasonal and other variations in product availability and purchasing.

Sustainability challenge – An issue or situation that threatens or undermines ecological integrity, racial equity and social justice, or the ability of future generations to meet their needs (e.g., biodiversity loss, poverty and inequality, and climate change), OR a goal or objective that contributes to the resolution of such an issue or situation (e.g., ecosystem health, universal human rights, and renewable energy generation). To identify sustainability challenges, it may be helpful to reference the [targets embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)](#), the principles outlined in the [Earth Charter](#), and/or the [Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries](#).