



Planetary Health Report Card (Medicine) 2026:

University College Cork



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

2025-2026 Contributing Team:

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Summary of Findings

Overall Grade	B
Curriculum	C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengths: Broad introductory coverage of major climate-health topics exists within the core curriculum, with growing faculty–student collaboration and some clinically relevant integration (e.g., environmental history-taking). ● Gaps: Teaching is brief and largely standalone, with limited longitudinal integration or assessment. There are no dedicated electives, reliance on student-led delivery remains high, and key areas (environmental toxins, local threats, Indigenous perspectives, climate-health communication) are underrepresented. ● Recommendations: UCC Medicine would benefit from embedding a longitudinal, assessable Planetary Health thread across existing modules, including at least one examinable component. Introducing two targeted additions: a faculty-led session on environmental toxins/reproductive health in the Irish context, and a brief clinical skills component on climate-health counselling would also broaden the student exposure to new topics in line with Planetary Health education. 	
Interdisciplinary Research	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengths: UCC has strong interdisciplinary sustainability research through the Sustainability Institute, including health-adjacent projects, community-informed programmes, and regular conferences that support active research engagement. ● Gaps: There is no centralised planetary health hub to showcase health–environment research and opportunities, and UCC is not formally affiliated with a national or international planetary health/ESH network. ● Recommendations: UCC Medicine would benefit from creating a centralised “Planetary Health at UCC” webpage and pursuing membership in a recognised planetary health or ESH network to enhance visibility and collaboration. 	
Community Outreach and Advocacy	B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengths: UCC engages the wider community through adult education programmes and sustainability events, with additional postgraduate learning opportunities and accessible national patient-facing climate-health resources. ● Gaps: Community partnerships are not consistently health-focused or integrated with the medical school, communication to students is variable, and hospital-level signposting of climate-health resources may be limited. ● Recommendations: UCC Medicine would benefit from formalising targeted health-focused community partnerships with defined student roles and establishing a regular communications channel to highlight planetary health education and advocacy opportunities. 	
Support for Student-Led Initiatives	A–
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengths: UCC provides tangible support through the Living Laboratory Seed Fund and a range of co-curricular sustainability activities. A student-led planetary health group exists with faculty involvement and growing curricular engagement. 	

- **Gaps:** Opportunities for planetary health research remain largely student-initiated rather than structured, with no centralised healthcare-specific pathway to mentors or projects. A formal sustainability student liaison role within decision-making structures is not yet established.
- **Recommendations:** UCC Medicine would benefit from appointing a named faculty lead and formal student liaison within curriculum governance, alongside creating a clear “Student Planetary Health Pathway” outlining mentors, project opportunities, and funding routes.

Campus Sustainability

B+

- UCC retains clear goals when it comes to campus sustainability, though no significant changes to existing policies have occurred in the past year with regards to the report card.
- **Recommendations:** Areas of improvement moving forward include expanding on environmentally safe transportation methods to and from campus, incorporating a composting system in addition to the already existing recycling program on campus, and adding sustainability requirements to all medical school events.

Statement of Purpose

Planetary health is human health.

The Planetary Health Alliance describes planetary health as “a solutions-oriented, transdisciplinary field and social movement focused on analysing and addressing the impacts of human disruptions to Earth’s natural systems on human health and all life on Earth.” This definition is intentionally broad, intended to encompass the multitude of ways that the environment can affect health, including water scarcity, changing food systems, urbanisation, biodiversity shifts, natural disasters, climate change, changing land use and land cover, global pollution, and changing biogeochemical flows. The health of humanity is dependent on our environment, and our environment is changing rapidly and in disastrous ways. Although the World Health Organization has called climate change “the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century,” many health professional school’s institutional priorities do not reflect the urgency of this danger to human health.

As future health professionals, we must be prepared to address the impacts of human-caused environmental changes on our patients’ health. This preparation is in the hands of the institutions providing our health professional training. It is imperative that we hold our institutions accountable for educating health professional students about the health impacts of climate change and other anthropogenic environmental changes, generating research to better understand health impacts and solutions, supporting related student initiatives, embracing sustainable practices as much as possible, and engaging with surrounding communities that are most affected by environmental threats. Because climate change and environmental threats disproportionately affect vulnerable populations (for example, communities of colour, older adults sensitive to health threats, and individuals in low-resource settings), these issues are inherently ones of equity and justice.

With the purpose of increasing planetary health awareness and accountability among health professional schools, we have created a Planetary Health Report Card that students internationally can use to grade and compare their institutions on an annual basis. This student-driven initiative aims to compare health professional schools nationally and internationally on the basis of discrete metrics in five main category areas: 1) planetary health curriculum, 2) interdisciplinary research in health and environment, 3) university support for student planetary health initiatives, 4) community outreach centred on environmental health impacts, and 5) school campus sustainability.

Definitions & Other Considerations

Definitions:

- **Planetary Health:** is described by the Planetary Health Alliance as “the health of human civilisation and the state of the natural systems on which it depends.” For example, topics such as climate change, declining biodiversity, shortages of arable land and freshwater, and pollution would all fall under the realm of planetary health. Both planetary health and traditional ‘environmental health’ examine the relationship between human health and the external environment, including extreme temperatures, chemicals, vector-borne diseases, etc. Planetary health explicitly concerns itself with the potential health harms associated with human-caused perturbations of natural systems. Therefore, the human health focus of planetary health makes the field well-adapted for the context of health professional education. Throughout this report card, we use the term planetary health to refer to this broad swath of topics, but resources do not need to explicitly include the term “planetary health” to satisfy the metric.
- **Sustainable Healthcare:** As defined by the Academy of Royal Colleges, sustainable healthcare involves ensuring the ability to provide good quality care for future generations by balancing the economic, environmental, and social constraints and demands within health care settings. A sustainable healthcare system maintains population health, reduces disease burden and minimises use of healthcare services.
- **Education for Sustainable Healthcare (ESH):** is defined as the process of equipping current and future health professionals with the knowledge, attitudes, skills and capacity to provide environmentally sustainable services through health professional education, thus working to decrease the enormous environmental impact of the healthcare industry. Planetary Health Education is an integral part of this education rather than an end in itself. This is because knowledge on Planetary Health is required to be able to fully understand the necessity of sustainable healthcare as well as being part of the broader knowledge needed to fully protect and promote health. In summary, ESH is covered by the three Priority Learning Outcomes of the Centre of Sustainable Healthcare below, and Planetary Health Education is embraced in the first learning objective and is a fundamental requirement to achieve learning outcomes 2 and 3:
 1. Describe how the environment and human health interact at different levels.
 2. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to improve the environmental sustainability of health systems.
 3. Discuss how the duty of a doctor to protect and promote health is shaped by the dependence of human health on the local and global environment.
- **Medical School/Department vs. Institution:** When “Medical school” is specified in the report card, this only refers to curriculum and resources offered by the School/department of Medicine and does not include offerings from other parts of the university (e.g. undergraduate departments (USA), other related departments (e.g. Public Health, Population Health departments)). In contrast, when “institution” is specified in the report card, we are referring to the university more broadly including all of its campuses. Any resource reasonably accessible by medical students, no matter where in the institution the resource comes from or if it is

specifically targeted for medical students, can meet this metric.

- **Environmental history (Curriculum Section):** This is a series of questions students are taught to ask during medical encounters that elicits patients' exposures and environmental risk factors. Historically, this has included consideration of exposures like pesticides, asbestos, and lead, though in the modern era shaped by climate change, it can be expanded to include things like wildfire smoke exposure, air pollution and mould after flooding. Key components include place of residence over the lifecourse, occupational history, food and water sources (e.g. meat from industrial feeding operations, regular fishing in contaminated water, access to clean drinking water), and exposure to air pollution. Please be as specific as possible when providing evidence for this metric.
- **Elective:** The word "elective" refers to an optional course or lecture series that a student can opt to take part in but is not a requirement in the core curriculum. Generally, these elective courses take place in the preclinical curriculum but vary by school.
- **Core Curriculum:** This refers to the taught material that is delivered to the entire cohort of students in one year.
- **Clerkship / Outreach:** This is a term used in the USA to refer to placements that medical students go on e.g. Pediatrics, General medicine, Psychiatry. In the UK these are referred to as rotations, outreach or placements. This is a relatively short (approximately 4-8 weeks) period of study and patient-centred clinical experience that takes place as part of the undergraduate programme.
- **Clinical rotation:** This is a term used to refer to placements that students go on (e.g., ophthalmology, surgery, cardiology).
- **Physiotherapy vs Physical Therapy:** For the purposes of this report card these terms are considered interchangeable. However, physiotherapy will be used primarily.
- **Community organisations:** For most institutions, there are existing groups that are not directly affiliated with the university and exist as a product of what the community the institution exists in cares about or needs. These specific community organisations relevant to this report include those that are focused around some aspect of climate and health preservation. These community organisations can include but are not limited to local mutual aid initiatives, underserved-resource distribution groups, clean-up and nature conservation groups, community gardeners, and other environmental-related organisations. If your institution does not have access to local volunteerships with community groups, please report any community organisations your institution or school has collaborated with.
- **Climate justice:** The idea that certain population groups and geographical locations which are disproportionately more impacted by climate change are already economically and socially disadvantaged. This double vulnerability sits alongside pre-existing social justice concerns and should therefore shift policy and practice to mitigate the inequitable effects of the climate crisis.
- **Extractivism:** The removal of natural resources typically in large quantities. Within anthropology this term is often used in the context of colonialism to refer to the

historic seizing of natural resources, a practice which has developed business models tied to ecological degradation and loss of biodiversity.

- **Global South:** Nations that often have less economic and industrial development and are typically in the southern hemisphere. These nations have been found to be disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis.
- **Low socioeconomic status (SES):** An individual or geographical area that across a variety of socioeconomic factors (e.g., income, education, race/ethnicity) is considered vulnerable. This vulnerability has been correlated to more adverse health outcomes often as a consequence of encountering more barriers in accessing and receiving healthcare.
- **Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC):** Countries that have lower degrees of economic affluence.
- **Anthropogenic:** Created through human activity
- **Marginalized communities:** Groups excluded from mainstream economic, educational, social, and/or cultural experiences due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, and/or immigration status (Sevelius et al., 2020).

Scoring Matrix

- Elective coursework (1 point): This score applies to material that is actively selected by the students such as a module choice, or additional lecture series. By implication, only a given proportion of the cohort will receive this taught material.
- Brief coverage in the core curriculum (2 points): This score applies where a topic is covered only briefly in a core curriculum session. This implies that the entire cohort receives the same material. At minimum brief inclusion would qualify as inclusion in a single lecture slide in a single year.
- In depth coverage in the core curriculum (3 points): This score applies where a topic is taught in significant detail or where a topic is repeatedly brought up in different years. This might look like several dedicated lecture slides, or inclusion of the same topic in different lectures and teaching formats.

Other considerations:

- If there are more than one “tracks” at your institution with two different curricula (for example, Harvard Medical School has a Pathways and HST curriculum track), you can choose to fill out a report card for each track, or fill out just one report card and average the scores received by each track in cases where the scores are different (see the 2021 Harvard or Oxford report cards as examples). Where possible please indicate the proportion of students that are on each track.

Updated in 2025, a complete literature review by metric is available for the 2024/25 Medicine Report Card Template. This largely translates across disciplines although we are hoping to expand this process across all of our covered disciplines. A link to the 2025 literature review by metric is available [here](#).

Planetary Health Curriculum

Section Overview: *This section evaluates the integration of relevant planetary health topics into the medical school curriculum. Today's health professional students will be on the frontlines of tackling the health effects of climate and other environmental changes. Therefore, it is critical that students are trained to understand the health effects of these changes, as well as planetary health issues and principles more broadly. Topics like the changing geography of vector-borne diseases, the health consequences of air pollution, environmental health inequities, and disaster response principles must be part of every medical school's core curriculum.*

Curriculum: General

1.1. Did your <u>medical school</u> offer elective courses (student selected modules) to engage students in Education for Sustainable Healthcare or Planetary Health in the last year?	
Yes, the medical school has offered more than one elective whose primary focus is ESH/planetary health in the past year. (3 points)	
Yes, the medical school has offered one elective whose primary focus is ESH/planetary health in the past year. (2 points)	
The medical school does not have any electives whose primary focus is ESH/planetary health, but there are one or more electives that include a lecture on planetary health. (1 point)	
No, the medical school has not offered any electives on planetary health or electives that include ESH/planetary health topics in the past year. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>UCC Medical School does not offer electives specifically related to Education for Sustainable Healthcare (ESH) or Planetary Health. Student-selected special electives MX1006, MX2006, and MX3006, offered in first, second, and third year respectively, enable students to incorporate planetary health topics should they desire. The official stated objective of the module allows students the freedom to self-organise a module in an area of special interest in Medicine.</i></p> <p><i>The School of Public Health is working in collaboration with multiple universities and Erasmus+ to formulate a new curriculum and learning materials on the health impacts of climate change (CLIMATEMED project). Outputs of the project include the development of new curriculum and learning materials which may be suitable as an elective for medical students. However, this cannot yet contribute to the score for this metric as it is still under development.</i></p>	

Curriculum: Health Effects of Climate Change

1.2. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the relationship between extreme heat, health risks, and climate change?
This topic was explored in depth by the core curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was briefly covered in the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in elective coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>The module HC2002 (or MX2020 for graduate-entry students) includes one lecture covering climate change and key environmental issues in public health in which extreme heat is briefly (i.e. within 3 slides or less) mentioned.</i></p> <p><i>The module GM1003 features a student-led lecture in which the physiological effects of extreme heat on patients, mainly focusing on heat stress and heat stroke, are included as a learning objective. The presentation is graded coursework, however this specific learning objective is only to be covered by one student.</i></p> <p><i>The Planetary Health Committee at UCC has collaborated with professors to deliver a lecture on the health impacts of extreme heat to first-year graduate entry students for the previous 3 years. Efforts to make the content of these lectures examinable in order to be fully incorporated into the core curriculum are ongoing.</i></p>	

1.3. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the impacts of extreme weather events on individual health and/or on healthcare systems?	
This topic was explored in depth by the core curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was briefly covered in the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in elective coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>UCC's curriculum included a lecture titled "Planetary Health and Climate Change" in the module MX2020, briefly introducing the impact of extreme weather changes on healthcare systems.</i></p> <p><i>The module HC2002 also briefly discussed the effects of drastic weather changes and conditions on healthcare over the span of multiple lectures.</i></p> <p><i>The Planetary Health Committee at UCC has collaborated with professors to deliver a lecture on the health impacts of extreme weather to first-year graduate entry students for the previous 3 years. Efforts to make the content of these lectures examinable in order to be fully incorporated into the core curriculum are ongoing.</i></p>	

1.4. Does your medical school curriculum address the impact of climate change on the changing patterns of infectious diseases?

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

Score explanation:

The module HC2002, or MX2020 for graduate entry, contains two lectures in which this was briefly discussed. Climate change as a cause of increased incidence of infectious disease was mentioned in two slides of a lecture covering infectious diseases, and vector-borne diseases were referenced in relation to climate change in one slide of a lecture covering climate change and key environmental issues in public health.

Additionally, the module FM3005 on fundamentals of disease discusses changing infection patterns in its lecture on infectious diseases.

GM1002 for graduate entry briefly discusses in two lectures the rising importance of waterborne infections agents, but fails to directly convey its connection to climate change.

Finally, the Planetary Health Committee at UCC is collaborating with the Pathology department to develop a lecture on the impact of climate change on infectious diseases. This topic is expected to be incorporated into the graduate-entry first-year pathology core curriculum by the 2026-2027 academic year.

1.5. Does your medical school curriculum address the respiratory health effects of climate change and air pollution?

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

Score explanation:

The module HC2002, or MX2020 for graduate entry, contained one lecture that briefly discussed respiratory health effects in relation to climate change and air pollution in the context of public health.

Additionally, the module FM3005 (or GM1002 for graduate entry) on fundamentals of disease briefly discusses the respiratory impacts of air pollution.

Finally, the Planetary Health Committee at UCC is collaborating with the Physiology department to develop a lecture on the impact of air quality deterioration, allergen proliferation and extreme weather on the lungs. This topic is expected to be incorporated into the graduate-entry first-year pathology core curriculum by the 2026-2027 academic year.

1.6. Does your medical school curriculum address the cardiovascular health effects of climate change, including increased heat?

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

Score explanation:

The module HC2002, or MX2020 for graduate entry, contained one lecture that briefly discusses cardiovascular health effects in relation to climate change in the context of public health.

The module GM1003 features a student-led lecture in which the physiological effects of extreme heat in heart failure are included as a learning objective. The presentation is graded coursework, however this specific learning objective is only to be covered by one student.

The Planetary Health Committee at UCC has collaborated with professors to deliver a lecture on the health impacts of extreme heat on the cardiovascular system to first-year graduate entry students for the previous 3 years. Efforts to make the content of these lectures examinable in order to be fully incorporated into the core curriculum are ongoing.

1.7. Does your medical school curriculum address the mental health and neuropsychological effects of environmental degradation and climate change?

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

Score explanation:

The module HC2002, or MX2020 for graduate entry, contained one lecture which briefly covered the effects of environmental degradation and climate change on mental health.

The Planetary Health Committee is developing a lecture on climate change and mental health to be delivered in spring of 2026.

1.8. Does your medical school curriculum address the relationships between health, individual patient food and water security, ecosystem health, and climate change?

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

Score explanation:

The module HC2002, or MX2020 for graduate entry, contained one lecture which briefly covered the effects of climate change on food and water security and habitat/biodiversity loss as a topic in public health.

1.9. Does your medical school curriculum address the outsized impact of climate change on marginalised populations such as those with low SES, women, communities of colour, Indigenous communities, children, homeless populations, and older adults?

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

Score explanation:

The module HC2002, or MX2020 for graduate entry, contained two lectures addressing this topic. One lecture, which discusses planetary health within public health, has 4 slides describing the effects of climate change on marginalised communities. To do so, the lecture references the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as well as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to briefly touch on how environmental factors have altered the health outcomes for vulnerable populations. A separate lecture in the same module briefly discusses climate change as a factor influencing migration, referencing how extreme drought in Somalia has caused mass displacement and compounding health issues in refugee communities.

1.10. Does your medical school curriculum address the unequal regional health impacts of climate change globally?

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned: 2

Score explanation:

The module HC2002, or MX2020 for graduate entry, contained one lecture which briefly discussed vulnerable population groups by global region. This topic was also discussed in the reference to extreme drought in Somalia.

Curriculum: Environmental Health & the Effects of Anthropogenic Toxins on Human Health

1.11. Does your medical school curriculum address the reproductive health effects of industry-related environmental toxins (e.g. air pollution, pesticides, microplastics)?

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned: 0

Score explanation:

This topic was not covered in the core curriculum or elective coursework.

1.12. Does your medical school curriculum address important human-caused environmental threats that are relevant to the university's surrounding community?

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned: 0

Score explanation:

This topic is not covered within the core curriculum or electives.

1.13. To what extent does your medical school emphasise the importance of Indigenous knowledge and value systems as essential components of planetary health solutions?

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

0

Score explanation:

UCC does not have a medical curriculum that emphasises indigenous health or native value systems. There are opportunities for North American students to introduce these elements, however the Irish curriculum does not voluntarily address these topics given their different history/demographics in relation to indigenous topics.

1.14. Does your medical school curriculum address the outsized impact of anthropogenic environmental toxins on marginalised populations such as those with low SES, women, communities of colour, children, homeless populations, Indigenous populations, and older adults?

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)

This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

Score explanation:

In GM1020 there is brief discussion and introduction to pollutant effects on health and marginalised communities. This is expanded slightly upon in CP5500 Preparedness for Practice in a single 1-2 hour lecture on environmental impact of healthcare and waste. At this moment, students are leading the inclusion of a Respiratory Physiology and Climate change lecture in GM1002 that discusses the impact of airborne particulate matter on communities and health.

Curriculum: Sustainability

1.15. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the environmental and health co-benefits of a plant-based diet?	
This topic was explored in depth by the core curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was briefly covered in the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in elective coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 point)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>UCC has not added significant plant-based dietary lessons to the core or elective curriculum since last year's PHRC. Current lessons on this topic remain limited to discussion of plant and mediterranean diet relationship to human biochemistry and metabolism. There are opportunities to explore this more heavily in the few dietary lectures that occur once a year in years 4 and 5.</i></p>	

1.16. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the carbon footprint of healthcare systems?	
This topic was explored in depth by the core curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was briefly covered in the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in elective coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>UCC curriculum briefly discusses healthcare environmental impacts and carbon footprint in CP4006 Anesthetics lecture, HC2002 Person, Culture, and Society, and CP5500 Preparedness for Practice. To complement this, a student-led lecture detailing the effects of anesthetic gases and surgical waste was delivered to GEM2 students this fall. Given the nature of the delivery being isolated to smaller components of lectures, and the only lecture specifically discussing this topic being student-led, we consider the topic to be briefly covered in the core curriculum.</i></p>	

1.17. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum cover these components of sustainable clinical practice in the <u>core</u> curriculum? (points for each)	Score
The health and environmental co-benefits of avoiding over-medicalisation, over-investigation and/or over-treatment (2 points)	0
The environmental impact of pharmaceuticals and over-prescribing as a cause of climate health harm. Alternatively teaching on deprescribing where possible and its environmental and health co-benefits would fulfil this metric. (2 points) .	0

The health and environmental co-benefits of non-pharmaceutical management of conditions where appropriate such as exercise or yoga classes for type 2 diabetes; social group activities such as gardening for mental health conditions; active transport such as bicycle schemes. This is commonly known as social prescribing in the UK. (1 point)	0
Environmental impact of surgical healthcare on planetary health and the climate crisis, and how can it be mitigated. (1 point)	1
The impact of anaesthetic gases on the healthcare carbon footprint and ways to reduce anaesthesia's environmental impacts, such as total intravenous anaesthesia or choosing less environmentally harmful anaesthetic gas options with reduced greenhouse gas emissions. (1 point)	1
The impact of inhalers on the healthcare carbon footprint and the environmental benefit of dry powdered inhalers over metered dose inhalers. (1 point)	1
Waste production within healthcare clinics and strategies for reducing waste in clinical activities (e.g. single use items in the inpatient or outpatient setting) (1 point)	1
<p><i>Score explanation: 4 points.</i></p> <p><i>Surgical waste, anesthetic gases, and waste products/single use items are covered briefly over the curriculum in CP5500 Preparedness for Practice, and CP3005/GM2015 anesthetics lectures. Further to this, student-led lectures being integrated into core curriculum go further in depth on some of these topics, specifically surgical waste and anesthetic gases and carbon footprint. In clinical tutorials, the environmental impact of inhalers is mentioned briefly, and further emphasis on other inhaled medical agents could be discussed to improve upon this.</i></p>	

Curriculum: Clinical Applications

1.18. In training for patient encounters, does your <u>medical school's</u> curriculum introduce strategies to have conversations with patients about the health effects of climate change?	
Yes, there are strategies introduced for having conversations with patients about climate change in the core curriculum. (2 points)	
Yes, there are strategies introduced for having conversations with patients about climate change in elective coursework. (1 point)	
No, there are not strategies introduced for having conversations with patients about climate change. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>This is currently not covered or instructed in the core curriculum.</i></p>	

1.19. In training for patient encounters, does your <u>medical school's</u> curriculum introduce strategies for taking an environmental history or exposure history?

Yes, the core curriculum includes strategies for taking an environmental history. (2 points)	
Only elective coursework includes strategies for taking an environmental history. (1 point)	
No, the curriculum does not include strategies for taking an environmental history. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>In GM1010 students are instructed to ask about exposure to harmful substances/airborne irritants/products when taking history with a relevant clinical context (respiratory conditions). In CP4003 there is more emphasis in history-taking for evaluating home conditions and environmental pollutants/irritants in relation to pediatrics and newborns (dust, mold, gases, pet dander, etc...).</i></p>	

Curriculum: Administrative Support for Planetary Health

1.20. Is your <u>medical school</u> currently in the process of implementing or improving Education for Sustainable Healthcare (ESH)/planetary health education?	
Yes, the medical school is currently in the process of making major improvements to ESH/planetary health education. (4 points)	
Yes, the medical school is currently in the process of making minor improvements to ESH/planetary health education. (2 points)	
No, there are no improvements to planetary health education in progress. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	4
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>The UCC Medical School Curriculum Committee is actively enhancing planetary health education by introducing new lectures and collaborating with Irish Doctors for the Environment. In partnership with the Planetary Health Committee, the school is further increasing the integration of student-led lectures on planetary health into core GEM1 and GEM2 modules. Recently, the faculty has introduced a 1 hour lecture in CP5500 Preparedness for Practice that engages students to think about single use plastics and hospital waste.</i></p>	

1.21. How well are the aforementioned planetary health/Education for Sustainable Healthcare topics integrated longitudinally into the <u>core</u> curriculum?	
Planetary health/ESH topics are well integrated into the core medical school curriculum. (6 points)	
Some planetary health/ESH topics are appropriately integrated into the core medical student curriculum. (4 points)	
Planetary health/ESH is not integrated and is primarily addressed in (a) standalone lecture(s) . (2 points)	

There is minimal/no education for sustainable healthcare. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>Planetary health, climate change, and sustainability are discussed in stand-alone lectures, with the majority of focused climate and sustainability lectures being led by student members of the PHRC. While faculty is improving the integration of student-led lectures in the core curriculum, it is not longitudinal and could benefit from assignments or reflections on these topics throughout the program.</i></p>	

1.22. Does your <u>medical school</u> employ a member of faculty to specifically oversee and take responsibility for the incorporation of planetary health and sustainable healthcare as a theme throughout the course?	
Yes, the medical school has a specific faculty/staff member responsible for overseeing curricular integration of planetary health and sustainable healthcare. (1 point)	
No, the medical school does not have a specific faculty/staff member responsible for overseeing curricular integration of planetary health and sustainable healthcare. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>UCC's medical school has staff members on the curriculum committee who are directly involved in incorporating planetary health and sustainable healthcare throughout the course. Two specific faculty members involved are Dr Gabriella Rizzo and Dr Beth Brint.</i></p>	

1.23. Does your health professional curriculum include teaching on civic engagement/advocacy to address the environmental and structural determinants of health?	
This topic was explored in depth by the core curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was briefly covered in the core curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in elective coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was not covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>This topic was discussed in CP5500 Preparedness for Practice "Sustainability Workshop". At the end of this lecture/workshop, students were asked to consider ways to advocate for sustainable and waste-reducing initiatives in their future clinical or hospital practices. However, encouragement and suggestions for further advocacy and engagement in healthcare sustainability occurs primarily through student-led lectures and initiatives.</i></p>	

Section Total (40 out of 75)	53.33%
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Interdisciplinary Research

Section Overview: *This section evaluates the quality and quantity of interdisciplinary planetary health research at the broader institution. Interactions between health and the environment are complex and multifactorial. While climate change has been extensively studied from an environmental science perspective, planetary health is an emerging field. As leading health institutions with talented researchers and research resources, institutions should fund research studying the health effects of climate change and anthropogenic environmental toxins. This obligation is particularly strong because the public and policymakers are more attentive to climate change when its implications for human health are emphasised.*

2.1. Are there researchers engaged in planetary health research and healthcare sustainability research at your <u>institution</u>?	
Yes, there are faculty members at the institution who have a primary research focus in planetary health or sustainable healthcare/vetcare. (3 points)	
Yes, there are individual faculty members at the institution who are conducting research related to planetary health or healthcare sustainability, OR are part of a national/international sustainability working group, but it is not their primary research focus. (2 points)	
There are sustainability researchers at the institution , but not specifically associated with healthcare/vetcare. (1 point)	
No, there are no planetary health and/or sustainability researchers at the institution at this time. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>A few researchers at UCC have well-funded ongoing projects addressing societal health and care needs across Ireland. Deirdre Bennett aims to identify and integrate skills and methods to improve the knowledge and understanding of the relationship between healthcare and climate/planetary challenges, both now and in the future. Dr. Pauline Frizelle aims to improve language and communication in children, particularly those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Prof. Leahy-Warren's project focuses on elevating rates of breastfeeding across Ireland in many different ways, including government policy, legal protections, social/cultural attitudes, and familial support.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, the Sustainability Institute at UCC has over 400 researchers from 4 research centres, across 20 varied academic disciplines. They work to address a variety of sustainability challenges. The Sustainability Institute has a core of targets that they are developing approaches to respond to, such as Healthy Environment, Climate Action, and Circular Economy. The researchers employed by the institute have work and experience in 5 separate research platforms, including those of Marine, Energy, Environment, Materials, and Agri-food.</i></p>	

2.2. Is there a dedicated department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research at your institution?

There is **at least one** dedicated department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research. (3 points)

There is **not currently** a department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research, but there are **plans** to open one in the next 3 years. (2 points)

There is an **Occupational and Environmental Health department**, but no interdisciplinary department or institute for planetary health research. (1 point)

There is **no** dedicated department or institute. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

3

Score explanation:

The Sustainability Institute at UCC is actively working to generate approaches to develop global awareness and strategies for protecting the natural environment and tackling the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. The Sustainability Institute at UCC has over 400 researchers from 4 research centres across 20 varied academic disciplines. They are actively engaged in many varied research projects related to improving climate change and environmental health, like population nutrition in Europe, improving water quality, and wind farm development in Ireland, among others.

2.3. Is there a process by which communities disproportionately impacted by climate change and environmental injustice give input or make decisions about the research agenda at your institution?

Yes, there is a process in which community members impacted by climate and environmental injustice have **decision-making power** in the climate + environmental research agenda. (3 points)

Yes, there is a process in which community members impacted by climate and environmental injustice **advise** the climate + environmental research agenda. (2 points)

No, but there are **current efforts** to establish a process for community members to advise or make decisions on the research agenda. (1 point)

There is **no** process, and **no** efforts to create such a process. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

3

Score explanation:

UCC have demonstrated some institutional initiatives focused on environmental injustice, intersectionality, or community-based research goals. The School of Law has initiated the [Youth Climate Justice Project](#), investigating how young climate activists assert their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Five faculty members will study youth climate action in various jurisdictions to understand the role of youth in driving social change.

In addition, UCC began the [Climatude](#) project running from 2025-2028, an engaged research programme designed to develop an in-depth understanding of Irish people's attitudes, beliefs, and values related to climate change. It seeks to examine public perceptions of specific climate mitigation and adaptation measures, as well as attitudes toward governance structures and decision-making processes. The project maps knowledge and perceptions of climate change and its societal implications, exploring how attitudes are shaped by information sources, social networks, and broader public discourse. Importantly, it analyses how beliefs and values intersect with socio-demographic factors, including gender, life stage, socio-economic privilege, and educational attainment.

2.4. Does your institution have a planetary health website that centralises ongoing and past research related to health and the environment?

There is an **easy-to-use, adequately comprehensive** website that **centralises** various campus resources related to health and the environment including all of the following: upcoming events, leaders in planetary health at your institution, and relevant funding opportunities. (3 points)

There is a website that **attempts to centralise** various campus resources related to health and the environment, but it is hard-to-use, not updated, or not adequately comprehensive. (2 points)

The **institution** has an **Office of Sustainability website** that includes **some** resources related to health and the environment. (1 point)

There is **no** website. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

Score explanation:

UCC's Sustainability Institute (formerly the Environmental Research Institute, established in 2000) centralises ongoing and past research related to sustainability and the environment. Recently rebranded in December 2025, the Institute reflects UCC's expanded commitment to sustainability and brings together over 400 researchers working across disciplines. While the [website](#) is accessible and regularly updated, it is not specifically designated as a planetary health hub.

However, it features several projects aligned with planetary health themes. For example, research by Dr. Seamus O'Reilly explores the intersection of climate change and breast cancer care, highlighting both the health impacts of fossil fuel pollution and healthcare's significant carbon footprint, and proposing practical solutions for sustainable clinical practice. The study has been published and can be accessed through:

[https://www.clinical-breast-cancer.com/article/S1526-8209\(24\)00317-3/fulltext](https://www.clinical-breast-cancer.com/article/S1526-8209(24)00317-3/fulltext)

Overall, although UCC does not have a dedicated planetary health website, the Sustainability Institute serves as a central platform showcasing interdisciplinary research at the intersection of environment and health.

2.5. Has your institution recently hosted a conference or symposium on topics related to planetary health?

Yes, the institution has hosted at least one conference or symposium on topics related to planetary health in the past year. (4 points)	
Yes, the institution has hosted at least one conference or symposium on topics related to sustainable healthcare/vetcare in the past year. (3 points)	
Yes, the institution has hosted a conference on topics related to planetary health / sustainable healthcare/vetcare in the past three years. (2 points)	
The institution has not hosted any conferences directly, but they have provided financial support for a local planetary health event. (1 point)	
No, the institution has not hosted a conference on topics related to planetary health in the past three years. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	4
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p>UCC hosted events in 2025, including the annual UCC Law and Environment Conference on May 1, which featured a diverse lineup of Irish and international speakers discussing key developments in areas such as climate litigation and remedies, renewable energy, and nature conservation. The 2026 UCC Law and Environment Conference is scheduled for April 23.</p> <p>UCC also co-organised and hosted the NEB LAB Eco² Schools conference 2025 (NEB LAB Eco² Schools conference - 22 Nov 2025), with An Taisce the National Trust for Ireland, Ellinogermaniki Agogi and Alliance Sens & Economie as part of the New European Bahaus initiative. The conference aimed to bring together researchers, educators, stakeholders and policy makers to share perspectives and present outcomes from the project, with a particular focus on the role of schools in the New European Bahaus and open schooling, wherein schools partner with local communities to act as agents of community well-being through collaborative research in energy and resource efficiency.</p> <p>In January, UCC's College of Science, Engineering and Food Science hosted a multidisciplinary symposium on technological advances for monitoring air pollution, and in February, the university hosted the Sustainable Futures Forum, a high-level interdisciplinary event focused on climate and sustainability challenges and the role of universities in advancing climate action and societal well-being.</p>	

2.6. Is your <u>institution</u> a member of a national or international planetary health or ESH/ESV organisation?	
Yes, the institution is a member of a national or international planetary health or ESH/ESV organisation. (1 point)	
No, the institution is not a member of such an organisation. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p>	

UCC is not a member of any national or international planetary health or ESH organisation (such as Planetary Health Alliance, Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education, KLUG, etc).

However, it is important to note that it has demonstrated significant engagement with sustainability and planetary health-related activities. In 2025, it was ranked second globally in the [UI GreenMetric World University Rankings](#), and it has won [multiple designations](#) as a green campus. Further, in 2025 it launched the [Sustainability Institute](#), bringing together over 400 researchers engaged in sustainability research across disciplines.

UCC is a founding partner of [UNIC](#), the European University of Cities in Post-Industrial Transition, an alliance of ten universities across Europe working collaboratively with their cities to address urban challenges and create sustainable futures. These collective efforts highlight UCC's dedication to advancing planetary health and sustainability on both local and global scales.

Section Total (15 out of 17)	88.24%
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Community Outreach and Advocacy

Section Overview: This section evaluates a school's engagement in community outreach and advocacy efforts associated with planetary health. Researching and teaching planetary health is necessary but not sufficient. It is critical that institutions also directly engage with communities most affected by environmental health harms. Although climate change is a problem largely created by those with power and resources, its impacts fall disproportionately on under-resourced populations and communities of colour. Institutions should partner with local communities affected by climate change and pollution to share information about environmental health threats, advocate together for change, and provide opportunities for students to be a part of this work.

3.1. Does your <u>institution</u> partner with community organisations to promote planetary and environmental health?	
Yes, the institution meaningfully partners with multiple community organisations to promote planetary and environmental health. (3 points)	
Yes, the institution meaningfully partners with one community organisation to promote planetary and environmental health. (2 points)	
The institution does not partner with community organisations, but participates in community focused events relating to planetary health. (1 point)	
No, there is no such meaningful community partnership. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<i>Score explanation:</i> <i>UCC has a collaborative relationship with Cork Environmental Forum focusing on environmental research and sustainability in the community. In 2022 they developed goals and plans for the years of 2022-2025 for the partnership. There are modules for PhD students covering environmental sustainability. They complete evaluations of city water monitoring and hold workshops on climate action.</i> <i>UCC also has a student-led group advocating for planetary health in healthcare working under Irish Doctors through the environment. Although UCC's Medical School was not officially associated with this group, recent discussions with the faculty have revealed that there exists multidirectional support for the planetary health initiatives. A faculty member at UCC's School of Public Health has been appointed primary liaison and an invitation has been received to present findings from the present report card. UCC as a whole is involved in multiple community initiatives to promote environmental sustainability and planetary health.</i>	

3.2. Does your <u>institution</u> offer community-facing courses or events regarding planetary health?
The institution offers community-facing courses or events at least once every year. (3 points)

The institution offers courses or events open to the community at least once per year, but they are not primarily created for a community audience. (2 points)	
The institution has promoted community-facing courses or events, but was not involved in planning those courses or events. (1 point)	
The institution has not offered such community-facing courses or events. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>UCC offers community-facing education and events on climate/sustainability. UCC Adult Continuing Education provides open-enrolment programmes designed for non-traditional/community learners, including a Diploma and Certificate in Environment, Sustainability and Climate (found here: https://www.ucc.ie/en/ace-devsc/ and here: https://www.ucc.ie/en/ace-cevsc/).</i></p> <p><i>UCC also hosts recurring public-facing sustainability engagement such as Biodiversity Week events (found here: https://www.ucc.ie/en/sustainability-climate-action/news/ucc-celebrates-biodiversity-week-2025-on-our-beautiful-campus.html).</i></p> <p><i>Carbon Literacy: https://www.ucc.ie/en/sustainability-climate-action/education/carbon-literacy/ and sustainability education overview: https://www.ucc.ie/en/sustainability-climate-action/education/)</i></p>	

3.3. Does your <u>institution</u> have regular coverage of issues related to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare in university update communications?	
Yes, all students regularly receive communication updates dedicated to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare. (2 points)	
Yes, planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare topics are regularly included in communication updates to some courses . (1 point)	
Students do not receive communications about planetary health or sustainable healthcare. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>The Planetary Health Committee of UCC has delivered lectures to first year medical students pertaining to the effects of climate change on human physiology. These lectures have been expanded to cover new topics on the effects of planetary health on mental health, and anesthesiology, in addition to previous topics of Respiratory, Renal, Cardiovascular, and Gastrointestinal. Climate change was also discussed as a topic in the Public Health module to second year medical students. Furthermore, on one occasion the UCC Medical Education Officer sent out a memo regarding an on campus addressing climate change and sustainability in health care.</i></p>	

3.4. Does the institution or main affiliated hospital trust engage in professional education activities targeting individuals post-graduation with the aim of ensuring their knowledge and skills in planetary health and sustainable healthcare remain up to date during their professional career?

Yes, the **institution** or **main affiliated hospital trust** offers multiple in-person or online courses relating to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare for post-graduate providers, including at least one with a primary focus of planetary health. (2 points)

Yes, the **institution** or **main affiliated hospital trust** offers one course relating to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare for post-graduate providers. (1 point)

There are **no** such accessible courses for post-graduate providers. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

Score explanation:

UCC provides post-graduate education relevant to climate and health through EH6140 Environmental Health, which includes learning outcomes on climate change and health impacts (found here: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/eh6140/>).

In addition, the affiliated health service (HSE) provides multiple staff-accessible online learning modules explicitly covering climate change and health and sustainable healthcare (e.g., “Why Climate Change and Health Matters” and sustainability micro-learning modules listed in the HSE prospectus) (found here: https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/Prospectus_of_Quality_and_Patient_Safety_Education_and_Learning_Programmes_2026.pdf).

3.5. Does your institution or its affiliated teaching hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients about environmental health exposures?

Yes, the **institution** or **all affiliated hospitals** have accessible educational materials for patients. (2 points)

Some affiliated hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients. (1 point)

No affiliated medical centres have accessible educational materials for patients. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

Score explanation:

Accessible Irish health-system patient information exists on environmental exposure risks such as air pollution and associated health advice (suitable for use by affiliated hospitals), including the HPSC Air Quality resources and Air Pollution Health Advice pages (found here: [https://www.hpsc.ie/airquality/](#)).

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/environmentandhealth/airquality/> and here:
<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/environmentandhealth/airquality/airpollutionhealthadvice/>).

3.6. Does your institution or its affiliated teaching hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients about the health impacts of climate change?

Yes, the **institution** or **all affiliated hospitals** have accessible educational materials for patients. (2 points)

Some affiliated hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients. (1 point)

No affiliated hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

Score explanation:

*Accessible patient-facing resources addressing **heat/heatwaves** (a key climate-related health risk) are available through the HPSC Heatwaves guidance and Heatwave Health Advice (found here: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/environmentandhealth/guidance/heatwaves/> and here: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/environmentandhealth/guidance/heatwaves/generaladvice/>).*

Additional patient-facing advice on heat exhaustion/heatstroke is available via HSE public health information (found here: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/heat-exhaustion-and-heatstroke-in-children/>).

Section Total (10 out of 14)

71.43%

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Support for Student-Led Planetary Health Initiatives

Section Overview: This section evaluates institutional support for student-led planetary health initiatives, such as funding, fellowships, programming, and student groups. Planetary health is a young field and, as young people facing a future deeply shaped by climate change, students are often some of the first at an institution to engage with it. Institutions should provide support for students to engage in sustainability quality improvement (QI) initiatives, discover mentors in their area of interest, and receive funding for planetary health projects.

4.1. Does your <u>institution</u> offer support for students interested in enacting a sustainability initiative/QI project?	
Yes, the institution <i>either</i> offers grants for students to enact sustainability initiatives/QI projects or sustainability QI projects <i>are</i> part of the core curriculum. (2 points)	
The institution encourages sustainability QI projects (to fulfil clerkship or longitudinal requirements) and offers resources to help students succeed in these projects, but there is no student funding available and there is no requirement to participate. (1 point)	
No, the institution does not offer opportunities or support for sustainability initiatives or QI projects. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p>The Living Laboratory Seed fund was established in 2019 by UCC Green Campus. In July 2023 a third call for proposals was launched in support of UCC's new Sustainability and Climate Action Plan 2023-28. The funded projects should aim to solve real life problems relating to infrastructure and practices. To be funded, these projects have to meet the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Projects must support the goals and objectives outlined in UCC's Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (2023-28). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Projects that advance Green Labs and Plastic Free UCC programmes that aim to reduce carbon emissions or embed sustainability within the Connected Curriculum are particularly welcome. 2. Anyone may apply with cross-disciplinary collaborations being particularly welcome <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. However, the project should include at least 2 of the following: staff, students, community group / charity / NGO / industry 3. Maximum project duration of 12 months <p>Further information regarding the Living Lab Seed fund can be found here: https://www.ucc.ie/en/sustainability-climate-action/livinglab/</p> <p>Additionally, the UCC Planetary Health group is a medical student group encouraged by the medical school and are in direct contact with faculty members. The group is still under development, but continues to add new members and is exploring avenues for member research in the coming year.</p>	

4.2. Does your institution offer opportunities for students to do research related to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare/vetcare?

The **institution** has a **specific** research program or fellowship for students interested in doing planetary health/sustainable healthcare/vetcare research. (2 points)

There are research opportunities for students to perform research related to planetary health/sustainable healthcare, but these **require student initiative** to seek them out and carry them out in their spare time. (1 point)

There are **no opportunities** for students to engage in planetary health/sustainable healthcare research. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

Score explanation:

The final research project and electives are part of the medicine curriculum and offer opportunities to conduct research, however the focus of this project being related to planetary health or sustainability is dependent on the student. Examples of research opportunities within the wider sustainability framework include:

- 1) *UCC Futures Programme: an initiative that prioritizes research across ten strategic areas, including sustainability and environmental science. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/futures/>*
- 2) *APC Microbiome Ireland: This research initiative focuses on understanding the gastrointestinal microbiome and its impact on health and the environment. Their research objectives align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. They aim to address issues pertinent to planetary health such as antimicrobial resistance and sustainable food production. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/apc/>*

4.3. Does the institution have a webpage where students can find specific information related to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare/vetcare activities and mentors within the institution? For example, projects achieved, current initiatives underway at the medical school and/or contact of information of potential mentors.

The institution has a webpage with specific information related to planetary health or sustainable healthcare/vetcare that includes up-to-date information on relevant initiatives and contact information of potential mentors. (2 points)

There is an institution webpage that features some information on projects and mentors within planetary health and sustainable healthcare within the institution, but it lacks key information. (1 point)

There is **no institution** specific webpage for locating planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare projects or mentors. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

Score explanation:

UCC provides resources for students interested in planetary health and sustainable healthcare activities through multiple platforms:

1. **Environmental Research Institute (ERI):** The ERI serves as a hub for interdisciplinary research on environmental topics, including planetary health. Students can explore ongoing projects and research groups on the ERI website to identify potential supervisors and collaborators. While specific mentors are not listed, the website provides comprehensive information on the institute's projects and initiatives, which can help students connect with relevant researchers.
<https://www.ucc.ie/en/build/projects/completed/eri/>
2. **School of Public Health:** The School of Public Health at UCC is actively involved in research at the intersection of climate change and health. One key initiative is led by Professor Deirdre Bennett, titled "**Educating Healthcare Professionals for Climate Change Resilient and Sustainable Healthcare Systems.**" This program, which received significant funding, focuses on integrating climate change and sustainability into healthcare education. This initiative highlights UCC's commitment to preparing healthcare professionals to address planetary health challenges. Further details about this initiative can be found in a UCC news release.
3. **University College Cork, Official Website - Sustainability Tab** - There is information regarding UCC's sustainability initiatives and some of the ongoing sustainability projects available on UCC's official website but it lacks ties to sustainable healthcare and extra information regarding how to get projects underway and who to contact if you endeavour to begin one

4.4. Does your institution have registered student groups dedicated towards fostering a culture of planetary health engagement, scholarship, and advocacy on campus, supported by faculty advisors?

Yes, there is a student organisation **with faculty support** at my institution dedicated to planetary health or sustainability in healthcare. (2 points)

Yes, there is a student organisation at my institution dedicated to planetary health or sustainability in healthcare but it **lacks faculty support**. (1 point)

No, there is **not** a student organisation at my institution dedicated to planetary health or sustainability in healthcare. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

Score explanation:

The UCC Planetary Health Group is a group run by medical students supported by faculty members within the College of Medicine and Health who acts as the medical school liaison for sustainable initiatives and is on the curriculum committee board. They are still currently in the process of becoming an official group under UCC, however progress has been made with a faculty member appointed and a HSE (Health Service Executive) liaison person. The findings of the last 3 years have been presented at the UCC medicine undergraduate curriculum meetings. The members were open to the suggestions put forth.

4.5. Is there a student liaison representing sustainability interests who serves on a <u>department or institutional</u> decision-making council to advocate for curriculum reform and/or sustainability best practices?	
Yes, there is a student representative who serves on a department or institutional decision-making council/committee. (1 point)	
No, there is no such student representative. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<p><i>Score explanation: Each cohort in the UCC School of Medicine elects two class representatives every year to mediate general communication between the class and the faculty. However, the communication pertains to the course rather than conversations on sustainability. While there is no such decision-making council yet, there are ongoing discussions to implement an advocacy council for curriculum reform and sustainability best practices and there are plans to implement such a position by the next academic year (2025/2026). UCC is very receptive to facilitating a curriculum change and there are faculty members from both UCC and HSE involved in the discussions. Furthermore, as the UCC School of Medicine is currently undergoing a curriculum reform, this will permit more opportunities for direct communication between the departmental decision-making council and student liaisons representing sustainability interests moving forward.</i></p>	

4.6. In the past year, has the <u>institution</u> had one or more co-curricular planetary health programs or initiatives in the following categories? (1 point each)	Score
Projects where students are able to gain experience in organic agriculture and sustainable food systems, such as gardens, farms, community supported agriculture (CSA), fishery programs, or urban agriculture projects.	1
Panels, speaker series, or similar events related to planetary health that have students as an intended audience.	1
Events in which students learn directly from members of a local environmental justice community about the climate and environmental challenges they face, and how health professionals can partner with their community to address these exposures and impacts.	1
Cultural arts events, installations or performances related to planetary health that have students as an intended audience.	1
Local volunteer opportunities related to building community resilience to anthropogenic environmental impacts.	1
Wilderness or outdoors programs (e.g., that organise hiking, backpacking, kayaking, or other outings for students)	1
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>1. UCC runs a community garden project, which began in 2007, which is run by the Environmental and International Development Society. This garden uses elements of permaculture and allows students to experience and develop agriculture skills as well as take</i></p>	

home produce from it. See: [UCC Community Gardens](#)

2. On the 15th of October 2021, UCC Green Campus started the [Green Campus podcast](#) which aims to provide insight into what green campus has achieved while also interviewing individuals on how to make the planet a better place. They discuss topics related to planetary wellbeing as well as effective methods to reduce damage to the planet in day to day life. The program also schedules talks and sessions with people and organisations involved in planetary health, and the podcasts are released every three weeks. [Recently](#), UCC's energy manager Pat Mehigan, where he touched on the ongoing energy crisis, UCC's energy consumption and future targets such as becoming a carbon neutral campus by 2024. UCC's Green Campus also hosted a [UCC sustainability research seminar](#) on May 30th 2023 with 7 speakers who provided insight into ongoing cutting edge environmental research. This was open to all. As part of [Green Week 2023](#) a panel on the constitutional right to the environment and a speaker event reflecting on COP27 was held for students

3. The [UCC Co-Operative Society](#) has held events with local environmental justice representatives, such as talks with representatives of the Cork Cycling Campaign and other organisations promoting cycling regarding the socio-economic aspects of cycling and the environmental impacts.

4. The Glucksman Art Gallery run by UCC has a large emphasis on exploring the world of planetary health and environmental awareness through the arts. The gallery holds numerous exhibitions, events, talks and performances which raises awareness on these topics. They hold events such as exhibitions centred around [biodiversity and conservation](#). They are also focussed on [environmental education](#), with cultural projects that focus on three key goals including climate action and sustainability. For example, The People and the Planet installation focussed on artwork from recyclable and natural materials. The UCC environmental society also hosts events such as poster painting to promote planetary health through art. During Climate Action Week, UCC featured several events centred around climate action, including a stand-up comedy set, a student festival, and botanical painting.

5. The Environmental Society hosts many events to engage the local community, such as Tree Planting and Litter Picking events to keep the campus clean and green, as well as Solidarity walks against environmental injustices. [The UCC Greenshoots Changemakers](#) is a programme made to provide guidance for students looking to become involved in environmental action. This is a three-step process in which students are trained in effective communication, event organisation, and the impact of community response on environmental issues. Then, they make their vision for effective environmental action a reality. Finally, participants support new volunteers through the aforementioned steps. UCC green campus also offers monthly [guided meditation sessions](#). This is to offer students, staff and climate activists a space to relax, reflect and regenerate. The goal is to provide individuals with the tools to manage their climate anxiety. The session includes foraging and nature walks, bliss dance and guided sound baths with the belief that self care is climate care.

6. The Environment society in UCC hosts many outdoor events every year, such the Adventure Trip, where students hike through mountains in Wicklow county and camp, as well as cycling events with the local bicycle shop and repair store where students can find information on cycling. The Biological Earth and Environmental Society hosts many field trips such as one to Crosshaven, Cork where students learned about geological formations along coastlines. The Mountaineering Society also hosts a hike trip to Carrauntoohil, the highest peak in Ireland. The UCC Green Campus Program has hosted events such as the foraging walk, an informative walk along the banks of the UCC Campus to learn about the botanicals and

Ecosystem. As part of [Green Week 2023](#) events such as the Spring campus biodiversity walk was organised for students

Section Total (12 out of 15)

80.00%

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Campus Sustainability

Section Overview: This section evaluates the support and engagement in sustainability initiatives by the institution. The healthcare industry is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions as well as pollution that harms local, regional, and global ecosystems. While healthcare is, by nature, a resource-intensive endeavour, the healthcare sector is well poised to lead the world to a more sustainable future. This will involve scrutinising every aspect of how our systems operate, from where we source our energy, to how we build our infrastructure, to what companies we invest in. Our institutions, clinics, and hospitals must set the standard for sustainable practices, and show other sectors what is possible when it comes to minimising environmental impact.

5.1. Does your <u>institution</u> have an Office of Sustainability?	
Yes, there is an Office of Sustainability with multiple full-time staff dedicated to campus sustainability. If the Office of Sustainability serves the entire campus, there is at least one designated staff member for sustainability at the hospital. (3 points)	
There is an Office of Sustainability with one or more full-time staff dedicated to campus sustainability, but no specific staff member in charge of hospital sustainability. (2 points)	
There are no salaried sustainability staff , but there is a sustainability task force or committee. (1 point)	
There are no staff members or task force responsible for overseeing campus sustainability. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p>UCC established the Green Campus Programme, which has members from across the college community and includes staff and student representatives, and key personnel with responsibilities in relation to the sustainability strategy. Chaired by President John O'Halloran and Mark Poland (Director of Buildings and Estates), the forum meets regularly to drive forward the Green Campus project and sustainability within UCC. The sustainability officer is Dr. Maria Kirrane and the designated student health officer is Dr. Michael Byrne.</p> <p>Designated staff member for sustainability at the hospital - Ruadhri de Barra is the sustainability officer for CUH</p>	

5.2. How ambitious is your <u>institution's</u> plan to reduce its own carbon footprint?	
The institution has a written and approved plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 (5 points)	
The institution has a written and approved plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040 (3 points)	
The institution has a stated goal of carbon neutrality by 2040 but has not created a plan to reach that goal or the plan is inadequate (1 point)	

The institution does not meet any of the requirements listed above (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> UCC is committed to becoming a zero waste campus by 2030, and carbon neutral by 2040. This is covered in the “UCC Futures Sustainability” plan.</p>	

5.3. Do buildings/infrastructure used by the institution for teaching (not including the hospital) utilize renewable energy?	
Yes, institution buildings are 100% powered by renewable energy. (3 points)	
Institution buildings source >80% of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (2 points)	
Institution buildings source >20% of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (1 point)	
Institution buildings source <20% of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> Since May 2020, 100% of the electricity purchased by UCC has been supplied from a renewable source. However, because this renewable electricity is supplied through the national grid it is more appropriate to use a grid average carbon intensity in calculating the carbon footprint. According to the 2022 “Clean and Renewable Energy” report, 33.32% of total energy consumption at UCC is from clean and renewable sources. Further evidence may be found in the 2023 Sustainability report.</p>	

5.4. Are sustainable building practices utilised for new and old buildings on the <u>institution’s</u> campus, with design and construction of new buildings and remodelling of old buildings conforming to a published sustainability rating system or building code/guideline?	
Yes, sustainable building practices are utilised for new buildings on the institution’s campus and the majority of old buildings have been retrofitted to be more sustainable. (3 points)	
Sustainable building practices are utilised for new buildings on the institution’s campus, but most old buildings have not been retrofitted . (2 points)	
Sustainable building practices are inadequately or incompletely implemented for new buildings. (1 point)	
Sustainability is not considered in the construction of new buildings. (0 points)	

Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>Guided by UCC's internal design policies and guidelines as well as current statutory building regulations the University requires that all new buildings and significant refurbishment projects meet the Near Zero Energy Building (NZEB), achieve a minimum Building Energy Rating of A3, and a classification of Excellent as per BREEAM standards.</i></p> <p><i>For instance, the Western Gateway Building that hosts the medical school anatomy lab, won the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) Renewable Energy Award in 2012, and the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) Sustainable Design and Research award in 2011, and utilising waste heat from the computer rooms combined together with a ground source heat pump.</i></p> <p><i>Via the ISO 50001 Energy Management System, UCC ensures that the energy consumption of the university buildings are closely monitored and undergoes continuous optimisation and energy improvements.</i></p> <p><i>See UCC Building Design Policies, link:</i> https://www.ucc.ie/en/greencampus/practice/energy-water-and-climate-change/building-design-at-university-college-cork/</p> <p><i>See UCC's ISO 50001 Certification and further details on the campus' energy usage link:</i> https://www.ucc.ie/en/greencampus/practice/energy-water-and-climate-change/iso-50001/</p>	

<p>5.5. Has the <u>institution</u> implemented strategies to encourage and provide environmentally-friendly transportation options for students and reduce the environmental impact of commuting?</p>	
<p>Yes, the institution has implemented strategies to encourage and provide environmentally-friendly transportation options such as safe active transport, public transport, or carpooling and these options are well-utilised by students. Alternatively, the campus location is not amenable to unsustainable forms of transportation by default. (2 points)</p>	
<p>The institution has implemented some strategies to provide environmentally-friendly transportation options, but the options are unsatisfactorily accessible or advertised. (1 point)</p>	
<p>The institution has not implemented strategies to encourage and provide environmentally-friendly transportation options. (0 points)</p>	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score explanation: UCC has implemented certain strategies to promote more environmentally-friendly transportation such as encouraging students and staff to host events online when possible, as well as park & ride initiatives, but these are vague. Additionally, UCC has bike racks located across campus.</i> https://www.ucc.ie/en/greencampus/practice/commuting-and-business-travel/</p>	

5.6. Does your institution have an organics recycling program (compost) and a conventional recycling program (aluminium/paper/plastic/glass)?

Yes, the institution has **both** compost **and** recycling programs accessible to students and faculty. (2 points)

The institution has **either** recycling **or** compost programs accessible to students and faculty, but not both. (1 point)

There is **no** compost or recycling program at the institution. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

Score explanation: There are recycling bins readily accessible across campus, but compost bins are not consistently available.

5.7. Does the institution apply sustainability criteria when making decisions about the campus food and beverage selections (e.g. local sourcing, reduced meat, decreased plastic packaging)?

Yes, the institution has **adequate** sustainability requirements for food and beverages, including meat-free days or no red-meat, and **is engaged** in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (3 points)

There are sustainability guidelines for food and beverages, but they are **insufficient or optional**. The institution **is engaged** in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (2 points)

There are sustainability guidelines for food and beverages, but they are **insufficient or optional**. The institution is **not** engaged in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (1 point)

There are **no** sustainability guidelines for food and beverages. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

3

Score explanation: In 2016, UCC became the first University in Ireland to have fresh vegetables harvested from its own land and served its restaurants. The plot is managed by the family-owned “Waterfall Farms” who deliver the fresh produce to UCC’s catering company KSG. KSG has been awarded the highest accolade from the Sustainable Restaurant Association, a three star “Food Made Good” award. UCC Green Campus, UCC Health Matters, and KSG run the “Meatless Mondays” series in the main campus restaurant during term time. In 2022, Urban Farm was launched at North Mall. The Urban Farm operates on a closed-loop system, which uses 98% less water in comparison to traditional farms. Since January 2023, UCC has gone plastic free. Food Health and Wellbeing: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/greencampus/practice/food-health-and-wellbeing/>

5.8. Does the institution apply sustainability criteria when making decisions about supply procurement?

Yes, the institution has **adequate** sustainability requirements for supply procurement **and** is **engaged** in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (3 points)

There are sustainability guidelines for supply procurement, but they are **insufficient or optional**. The institution is **engaged** in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (2 points)

There are sustainability guidelines for supply procurement, but they are **insufficient or optional**. The institution is **not engaged** in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (1 point)

There are **no** sustainability guidelines for supply procurement. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

3

Score explanation: In July 2022, UCC was awarded a Gold Star from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). The data submitted by UCC under this transparent reporting tool can be accessed on the STARS website:

<https://reports.aashe.org/institutions/university-college-cork-national-university-of-ireland-cork-co-corcaigh/report/2022-07-28/>

Procurement, including the procurement of construction services, accounts for almost 20% of the University's total annual carbon footprint. In recognition of this impact, the UCC Procurement Office includes sustainability in all tendering specifications and criteria. Recent successful green procurement projects included the University's cleaning services, graphic design services, security services, car park management service, and sustainable printing service.

2021-22 Sustainability report:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/sustainabilityandclimateaction/21-22AnnualReport.pdf>

5.9. Are there sustainability requirements or guidelines for events hosted at the institution?

Every event hosted at the institution **must** abide by sustainability criteria. (2 points)

The institution **strongly recommends or incentivizes** sustainability measures, but they are **not required**. (1 point)

There are **no** sustainability guidelines for institution events. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

0

Score explanation: There is no sustainability requirement for medical school events besides a waste management plan. UCC does encourage sustainable practices, but it is not a requirement when completing a risk assessment prior to events.

5.10. Does your institution have programs and initiatives to assist with making lab spaces more environmentally sustainable?

Yes, the institution has **programs** and **initiatives** to assist with making lab spaces more environmentally sustainable. (2 points)

There are guidelines on how to make lab spaces more environmentally sustainable, but not programs or initiatives. (1 point)	
There are no efforts at the institution to make lab spaces more sustainable. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>Sustainable Futures is a broader cross-university initiative implemented by UCC that serves to drive sustainability and decarbonization. UCC has been in the process of reviewing two primary accreditation systems available for greening laboratory practises, namely “My Green Lab,” (a US based accreditation body) and the ‘Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF),’ (developed by “Green Lab Associates” in the UK). Previously, UCC trialled the LEAF programme across several chemistry labs in the Kane building, and has now assembled the “Green Lab Community,” which is composed of technical and research staff from throughout the University’s research-intensive buildings & institutes. Two labs from each discipline will be selected to trial and identify which system works best for all research facilities across UCC. This system will hopefully be established via a whole-institution approach in the future.</i></p>	

5.11. Does your <u>institution</u>’s endowment portfolio investments include fossil-fuel companies?	
The institution is entirely divested from fossil fuels and has made a commitment to reinvest divested funds into renewable energy companies or renewable energy campus initiatives. (4 points)	
The institution is entirely divested from fossil fuels. (3 points)	
The institution has partially divested from fossil fuel companies or has made a commitment to fully divest , but currently still has fossil fuel investments. (2 points)	
The institution has not divested from fossil-fuel companies, but faculty and/or students are conducting organised advocacy for divestment. (1 point)	
Yes, the institution has investments with fossil-fuel companies and there have been no efforts to change that. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	4
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p><i>UCC has completely divested from unsustainable energy production companies and has 84.00% of its investment pool in positive sustainability investments. Investments include forestry funds, ethical global equity fund, Irish energy efficiency fund, and renewable energy funds. Since the last valuation (2017) the portfolio has increased the proportion of sustainability investment funds. It has gained exposure to new themes (e.g., sustainable property) while also increasing its participation in existing themes such as renewable energy and social infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i>UCC is a signatory to the United Nations Principles on Responsible Investment. Becoming a signatory required UCC to sign a declaration agreeing to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• To incorporate Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) issues into investment analysis and decision-making processes;</i> 	

• *To be an active owner and to incorporate ESG issues into our ownership policies*

Section Total (24 out of 32)

75.00%

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Grading

Section Overview

This section focuses on the grading of the report card. The institution received a grade for each of the individual sections as well as an overall institutional grade. Section point totals were tallied, divided by the total points available for the section, and converted to a percentage. The overall institutional grade is a weighted average of the section grades, with curriculum receiving a higher weight owing to its larger number of metrics. Letter grades for each section and the institution overall were then assigned according to the table below.

Letter Grade*	Percentage
A	80% - 100%
B	60% - 79%
C	40% - 59%
D	20% - 39%
F	0% - 19%

**Within each grade bracket, a score in the top 5% (_5 to _9%), receives a “+”, and a score in the bottom 5% (_0- _4%) receives a “--”. For example, a percentage score of 78% would be a B+.*

Planetary Health Grades for the University College Cork School of Medicine.

The following table presents the individual section grades and overall institutional grade for the University College Cork School of Medicine on this Planetary Health Report Card.

Section	Raw Score %	Letter Grade
Planetary Health Curriculum (30%)	$(40/75) \times 100 = 53.33\%$	C
Interdisciplinary Research (17.5%)	$(15/17) \times 100 = 88.24\%$	A
Community Outreach and Advocacy (17.5%)	$(10/14) \times 100 = 71.43\%$	B
Support for Student-led Planetary Health Initiatives (17.5%)	$(12/15) \times 100 = 80.0\%$	A-
Campus Sustainability (17.5%)	$(24/32) \times 100 = 75.0\%$	B+
Institutional Grade	$(Ax0.3 + Bx0.175 + Cx0.175 + Dx0.175 + Ex0.175) = 71.07\%$	B

Report Card Trends

Section Overview

This graph demonstrates trends in overall and section grades for the years in which University College Cork has participated in the Planetary Health Report Card initiative.

