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# Planetary Health Report Card (Occupational Therapy) 2026: University of British Columbia

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

## 2025-2026 Contributing Team:

- Students: Fiona King\*, Marieke De Vynck\*, Kylie Yuen, Karen Johal, Lexie Gourdine, and Abby Gorton
- \*Primary Contacts: Fiona King ([kingf@student.ubc.ca](mailto:kingf@student.ubc.ca)), Marieke De Vynck ([marieked@student.ubc.ca](mailto:marieked@student.ubc.ca))

## Land acknowledgment:

The University of British Columbia's (UBC) Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) program is facilitated at three distributed sites across British Columbia, Canada. We acknowledge that we live, work, learn, and play on the unceded territory of the following First Nations:

- Northern Cohort (Prince George): Lheidli T'enneh
- Fraser Cohort (Surrey): Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group, Á,LENENEÇ ŁTE (W SÁNEĆ), Stó:lō, Stz'uminus, sc'əwaθenaʔl təməx<sup>w</sup> (Tsawwassen), sq'əc'iy aʔl təməx<sup>w</sup> (Katzie), Semiahmoo, q<sup>w</sup>a:ńłƏn (Kwantlen), k<sup>w</sup>ik<sup>w</sup>əł'əm (Kwikwetlem)
- Vancouver Cohort: šx<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy əmaʔl təməx<sup>w</sup> (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh

Úxwumixw (Squamish), Stz'uminus, Səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)

Since time immemorial these First Nations have stewarded these lands and have a deep connection to them. [Colonialism and exploitative relations are a driving cause of climate change](#), with settlers pushing Indigenous communities and culture off their historic lands to use the space for unsustainable natural resource extraction. The [effects of climate change disproportionately affect marginalized communities](#), including Indigenous communities in Canada. Many current sustainability initiatives and policies are rooted in colonial systems, however we must take on a climate justice lens and include Indigenous voices and knowledge to be able to adapt against the impacts of climate change and build resiliency for the future.

## Summary of Findings

<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>B+</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>B-</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The University of British Columbia’s Master of Occupational Therapy program has greatly increased the amount of planetary health content in the curriculum for the 2025-2026 year. First year students received a lecture titled “Climate Disaster Toolkit for Vulnerable Communities,” which discussed the impact of climate disasters on vulnerable communities and how occupational therapists can advocate for climate disaster awareness in their practices. Second year students received a lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy,” which provided a broad overview of the impact of climate change on human health, the importance of practicing sustainable healthcare, and opportunities for occupational therapists to engage in climate action. There was also an optional module offered to first-year students in OSOT 525: Occupation in Practice II that included readings on mental health, climate change and eco-anxiety.</li> <li><b>Recommendations:</b> We suggest that the department continues to integrate content on the impact of climate change on human health and occupations throughout the occupational therapy curriculum. As well, we suggest that students are educated on the role of occupational therapists in advocating for more sustainable workplaces and provision of sustainable occupational therapy services.</li> </ul>	
<b>Interdisciplinary Research</b>	<b>A</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The University of British Columbia has a host of planetary health and sustainability research initiatives including an interdisciplinary group of researchers focused on addressing planetary health and healthcare sustainability, as well as the Climate Change and Planetary Health Initiative which publishes feature articles that showcase the research and researcher’s narratives. Additionally, the UBC Continuing Professional Development unit and Climate Solutions Research Collective within the Faculty of Medicine has hosted a full day conference about addressing planetary health as health professionals.</li> <li><b>Recommendations:</b> We encourage UBC and the Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy departments to evaluate the process and media through which they present UBC planetary health engagement and initiatives. UBC may benefit from restructuring a centralized website that allows easy access to the breadth of projects, events, and research the staff, students and faculty actively engage in.</li> </ul>	
<b>Community Outreach and Advocacy</b>	<b>A</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The University of British Columbia has multiple groups, both student-led and staffed to promote climate change awareness and provide educational outreach to students, faculty, and members of the community. UBC partners with local organizations to promote planetary health and advocate for climate action. Courses and events are available to UBC alumni in health professions following graduation to learn about and engage with planetary health. Resources for patients regarding climate change and health exposures and impacts are available at affiliated teaching sites where occupational therapy students learn.</li> <li><b>Recommendations:</b> Provide more opportunities for students to have placements at community partners that focus on planetary health, more public-facing events, further education, and patient resources that link occupational therapy and planetary health. Continue to partner with local communities most impacted by climate change and environmental health harms and pursue further partnerships.</li> </ul>	
<b>Support for Student-Led Initiatives</b>	<b>A-</b>

- The University of British Columbia offers many opportunities for students to engage in sustainability initiatives. Some opportunities include grants for student-led research projects, exploration alongside sustainability researchers, and the recent creation of a new student-led club dedicated to planetary health engagement and advocacy.
- **Recommendations:** Current financial support for student-led initiatives within UBC engages with sustainability more broadly and would benefit from a more explicit focus on planetary healthcare. While the occupational therapy program is small scale at this time and implementing more student opportunities may not be feasible, we recommend that they partner with the medical school to offer increased support to students interested in sustainable initiatives.

## Campus Sustainability

**B+**

- UBC's Vancouver campus has made many good steps towards creating a more sustainable campus. They have made many realistic and time-bound commitments to improving sustainability campus-wide and have clearly made a commitment to increasing sustainability education on campus. Particular strengths include UBC's robust network of sustainability offices and initiatives, from the UBC Sustainability office to the UBC Farm, and the overarching Campus as a Living Lab initiative.
- **Recommendations:** The key focus for UBC's campus sustainability should be to uphold the commitments made by the university. UBC is a leader in institutional sustainability in Canada, much of which is made possible through UBC Sustainability. Many positive climate-related policies are in place or have been planned; however care is needed to ensure these policies are enacted to the fullest extent. Of particular interest are UBC's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2035 and fully divesting the endowment fund from fossil fuels by 2030, as well as decreasing GHG emissions associated with food services by 50% by 2030. Upholding these commitments will be essential to UBC's campus sustainability. We also recommend making sustainability guidelines for campus food, resource procurement, and event planning into mandatory policies.

# 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, and 4) community outreach centred on environmental health impacts 5) school campus sustainability.

# Definitions & Other Considerations

## Definitions:

- **Planetary Health:** is described by the Planetary Health Alliance as “the health of human civilization 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.
- **Occupational Therapy School/Department vs. Institution:** When “school” is specified in the report card, this only refers to curriculum and resources offered by the School/department of Occupational Therapy 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 Occupational Therapy students, no matter where in the institution

the resource comes from or if it is specifically targeted for medical students, can meet 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 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 hope to expand this process across all of our covered disciplines. A link to the 2025 literature review by metric is available [here](#).

### Noted areas for future improvement of the Occupational Therapy PHRC:

This current template was produced by a team of students from UK universities and from one South African University with additional input from occupational therapy educators from the UK. This approach is limited by the number of individuals and the diversity of opinions used to shape this occupational therapy PHRC template. Going forward collecting the perspectives of occupational therapy students and educators across the globe should enhance this template. Additionally, gaining feedback from Indigenous communities internationally, especially from the Global South, would provide much-needed insight to develop this template.

# Planetary Health Curriculum

***Section Overview:*** This section evaluates the integration of relevant planetary health topics into the occupational therapy program curriculum. Today's occupational therapy students will be on the frontlines of tackling the health effects of climate and other environmental changes. Therefore, it is critical that occupational therapy 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 occupational therapy program's core curriculum.

## Curriculum: General

<b>1.1 Did your occupational therapy department offer elective courses/lectures (student selected modules) to engage students in Education for Sustainable Healthcare (ESH) or Planetary Health in the last year?</b>	
Yes, the occupational therapy school has offered <b>more than one</b> elective whose primary focus is ESH/planetary health in the past year. (3 points)	
Yes, the occupational therapy school has offered <b>one</b> elective whose primary focus is ESH/planetary health in the past year. (2 points)	
The occupational therapy school does <b>not</b> have any electives whose primary focus is ESH/planetary health, but there are one or more electives that include a <b>lecture</b> on planetary health. (1 point)	
No, the occupational therapy school has <b>not</b> 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>There is one elective course offered through the Department of Occupational Therapy - OSOT 301: Introduction to Human Occupation. This course contains one lecture on planetary health, titled "Climate Change and Sustainability: Implications for Health and Occupation." However, this course is only offered to undergraduate students and is not offered as part of the occupational therapy program curriculum.</p> <p>There was an optional learning section on climate change and eco-anxiety that was implemented this year in OSOT 525: Occupation in Practice II. This module included optional readings and a worksheet on hope and dealing with mental health challenges related to climate change and eco-anxiety.</p> <p>As part of the Master of Occupational Therapy Program at the University of British Columbia, students complete a research project alongside faculty and present their findings at a Capstone Conference. Planetary health has been implemented as a research topic for students in the last</p>	

several years, with “Climate-Specific Health Literacy in Canadian Occupational Therapists” being presented at the 2025 Capstone Conference. Although this is not a lecture, students can select a planetary health topic for their research project, which is a key component in the curriculum. Therefore, we have awarded the Department of Occupational Therapy 1 point. This research experience equips graduates from the program to be evidence-driven practitioners and inspires continuous learning and progress in the field of occupational therapy.

*Recommendations:*

The Department of Occupational Therapy is starting to make changes by adding more optional climate-change related readings into their curriculum. They could offer optional lectures or workshops for students, and could consider partnering with the Sustainability Office at the University of British Columbia. These workshops could include planetary health topics relevant to occupational therapy, such as providing sustainable interventions and therapy to clients and developing more sustainable workplaces. It is evident that climate-related research is important to the faculty in this department, and we encourage them to continue sharing the important work they are doing with students and providing opportunities for students to be involved throughout the program.

*Curriculum: Health Effects of Climate Change*

**1.2. Does your occupational therapy department’s 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:

3

*Score explanation:*

This topic was covered in two lectures throughout the core curriculum. First-year students received a lecture titled “Climate Disaster Toolkit for Vulnerable Communities,” which briefly introduced the relationship between extreme heat, health risks and climate change, and the importance of having a proactive climate toolkit in place. This lecture was followed by an in-class activity that encouraged students to seek out resources for occupational therapy practice related to climate disasters.

A lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy” was delivered to second-year students, which provided an in-depth examination of extreme heat, health risks and climate change. This lecture focused on the rising global temperatures and the impact of extreme heat on human health, including heat-related illness, death, and wildfire and drought risk, and how we can take actionable steps towards change as occupational therapists.

*Recommendations:*

Ensure these two lectures are permanent fixtures in the curriculum, and consider expanding on how occupational therapy students can advocate and care for clients facing these health risks in their future practices.

**1.3. Does your occupational therapy department's curriculum address the impacts of extreme weather events on individuals' health, occupations and wider 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:

3

*Score explanation:*

This topic was covered in two lectures throughout the core curriculum. First-year students received a lecture titled "Climate Disaster Toolkit for Vulnerable Communities," where the topic of extreme weather events was covered. This lecture discussed how we can help vulnerable communities better prepare for these extreme weather events, and included an in-class activity that encouraged students to seek out resources for occupational therapy practice related to climate disasters.

A lecture titled "OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy" was delivered to second-year students, which provided an in-depth examination of extreme weather events and their effect on human health. This lecture included topics such as extreme heat, air pollution, vector-borne disease, food and water insecurity, and mental health impacts, as well as infrastructure damage, and provided a broader look at how climate change impacts occupational therapy practice.

*Recommendations:*

Ensure these two lectures are permanent fixtures in the curriculum, and consider providing further education or training on providing equipment, therapy, and support to clients and their communities, in anticipation of and following, extreme weather events.

**1.4. Does your occupational therapy department's 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
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> This topic was briefly covered in a lecture titled, “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy.” It contained one slide discussing the change in infectious disease vectors due to climate change, and included examples of diseases with increasing range and their transmission.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i> Ensure this lecture is permanently included in the curriculum, and consider teaching clinical skills to address these health needs as occupational therapists, including facilitating conversations with clients or communities about the health implications of climate-related changes in disease patterns.</p>	

<b>1.5. Does your <u>occupational therapy department’s</u> curriculum address the effects of climate change and air pollution on respiratory health and related occupational performance?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> This topic was covered in-depth in a lecture titled, “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy.” The content discussed the impacts of air pollution and wildfire smoke on respiratory health, and the overall impact of climate change on human health.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i> Ensure this lecture is permanently included in the curriculum, and consider providing further details on the implications of respiratory-related health concerns caused by climate change and their impact on human occupation and occupational therapy practice.</p>	

<b>1.6. Does your <u>occupational therapy department’s</u> curriculum address the effects of climate change, including rising temperatures, on cardiovascular health and related occupational performance?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	

This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> This topic was covered in a lecture titled, “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy.” It discussed the consequences of rising global temperatures, the impact of extreme heat on cardiovascular health, and the signs of extreme heat illness such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i> Ensure this lecture is permanently included in the curriculum, and consider providing further details on the impact of rising temperatures on cardiovascular health, as well as the implications related to occupational performance for occupational therapy clients.</p>	

<b>1.7. Does your <u>occupational therapy department’s</u> curriculum address the mental health and neuropsychological effects of environmental degradation and climate change?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> This topic was briefly covered in a lecture titled, “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy.” It contained two slides discussing the impact of mental health and climate distress, and how people are experiencing climate grief and climate anxiety due to environmental degradation.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i> Ensure this lecture is permanently included in the curriculum, and consider providing further details on the mental health impact of climate change. Additionally, consider providing training on how to facilitate conversations with clients and communities about mental health and climate change by adding to pre-existing lectures or offering more lectures with this content.</p>	

<b>1.8. Does your <u>occupational therapy department’s</u> curriculum address the relationships between health, individuals’ food and water security, ecosystem health, and climate change?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	

This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  This topic was covered in a lecture titled, “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy.” It covered food and water insecurity; how food and water quality and supply impacts human health; how the health of our ecosystems directly impacts our food, water and overall health; and how those with land-based occupational practices are at greater risk of negative impact.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i>  Ensure this lecture is permanently included in the curriculum, and consider providing further details on the relationship between food and water security and ecosystem health on human health and occupational performance.</p>	

<b>1.9. Does your occupational therapy department's curriculum address how historical abuses of power (e.g. colonialism, extractivism, economic exploitation and marginalisation) are both responsible for the climate crisis and disproportionately impact marginalised populations (e.g. low SES, women, communities of colour, Indigenous communities, children, homeless populations, and older adults)?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  This topic was covered in two lectures throughout the core curriculum. First-year students received a lecture titled “Climate Disaster Toolkit for Vulnerable Communities,” which discussed how vulnerable communities, such as Indigenous communities, lower-income households, communities of colour, people with disabilities, and older adults are at greater risk of climate-related consequences and climate injustice.</p> <p>A lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the Role of Occupational Therapy” was delivered to second-year students, which provided a broader examination of historical abuses of power and their responsibility in climate change. This lecture discussed how the wealthiest countries create the most greenhouse gases, the concept of waste colonialism, the role of social determinants of health, and how marginalized communities, specifically Indigenous communities in Canada, are being severely impacted by these actions.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i></p>	

Ensure these two lectures are permanent fixtures in the curriculum, and consider providing further details on the climate injustices that marginalized communities face. While the impact of colonialism on Indigenous peoples' health and occupational participation is covered in-depth in the occupational therapy curriculum, it would be worthwhile introducing further curriculum content regarding the effects of colonialism on climate change and the disproportionate impacts on Indigenous communities and other marginalized populations in addition to the existing content.

**1.10. Does your occupational therapy department's curriculum address the unequal regional health impacts of climate change globally and/or climate justice?**

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 lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy” was delivered to second-year students, and did not discuss the unequal regional health impacts of climate change globally. The lecture is centered on the areas of climate risk facing Canada, but does not dive deep into regional inequities at a global level.

*Recommendations:*

Ensure this lecture is permanently included in the curriculum, and consider providing further information on the unequal regional health impacts of climate change on a global scale.

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

**1.11. Does your occupational therapy department's curriculum address the effects of industry-related environmental toxins on health (e.g. air pollution, pesticides), for example during paediatric or reproductive health curriculum?**

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:

3

*Score explanation:*

The lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy” was delivered to second-year students, which provided an in-depth examination of the effects of industry-related environmental toxins on health, discussing the impacts of extreme heat, air pollution and wildfire smoke, and vector-borne disease. Additionally, it explores the role of water and food insecurity on our health, and how climate distress may impact mental health.

*Recommendations:*

Ensure this lecture is permanently included in the curriculum, and consider providing further details on the effects of industry-related environmental toxins on health.

**1.12. Does your occupational therapy department’s 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:*

The lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy” was delivered to second-year students, and discussed how our surrounding community has been impacted by wildfires and heat domes. Though this discusses our surrounding community, it does not address the human-caused environmental threats relevant to the university’s surrounding area. Other environmental & climate components of the curriculum also do not discuss this.

*Recommendations:*

Ensure this lecture is permanently included in the curriculum, and consider providing further details on the human-caused environmental threats relevant to the university’s surrounding community.

**1.13. To what extent does your occupational therapy department emphasise the importance of knowledge and value systems from Indigenous communities and the Global South as essential components of planetary health solutions?**

These knowledge and value systems are **integrated throughout** the occupational therapy school’s planetary health education (3 points)

These knowledge and value systems as essential components of planetary health solutions are included **briefly** in the core curriculum. (2 points)

These knowledge and value systems as essential components of planetary health solutions are included in **elective** coursework. (1 point)

This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> The importance of knowledge and value systems from Indigenous communities and the Global South are not discussed in the environmental lectures delivered in this program.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i> Ensure that the knowledge and value systems from Indigenous communities and the Global South are topics added to the developing environmental &amp; sustainability lectures included in the curriculum.</p>	

<b>1.14. Does your <u>occupational therapy department's</u> curriculum address the outsized impact of anthropogenic environmental toxins on marginalized populations such as those with low SES, women, communities of colour, children, homeless populations, Indigenous populations, and older adults?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> The lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy” briefly introduces social determinants of health and how they pertain to disproportionate effects of climate change more broadly (e.g., exploring various vulnerability factors including demographics and geographical location in relation to health risk and health outcomes).</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i> Expand on existing content to include broader depth of information on how anthropogenic environmental toxins are experienced more drastically by marginalized communities.</p>	

*Curriculum: Sustainability*

<b>1.15. Does your <u>occupational therapy department's</u> curriculum address the environmental and health co-benefits of holistic lifestyle adaptations (e.g. plant-based diets, use of greenspaces and social prescribing)?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	

This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> The lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy” was delivered to second-year students, and touches on holistic health, including human health, climate system health, and ecological systems health, but does not discuss these at length.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i> Provide further information on the environmental and health co-benefits of holistic lifestyle adaptations in the core curriculum and consider including discussions around integrating social prescribing into practice and community support referrals occupational therapists can make in different practice settings.</p>	

<b>1.16. Does your <u>occupational therapy department’s</u> curriculum address the carbon footprint of healthcare systems?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> The lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the role of Occupational Therapy” was delivered to second-year students, and touched on carbon footprints in the healthcare system, relating it to occupational therapy practice. Though the carbon footprint of healthcare systems is discussed, the curriculum does not include thorough exploration on actionable steps to address this.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i> Ensure this lecture is permanently included in the curriculum, and consider exploring actionable steps occupational therapists can take to address the carbon footprint of healthcare systems.</p>	

<b>1.17. Does your <u>occupational therapy department’s</u> curriculum cover these components of sustainable clinical practice in the <u>core</u> curriculum? (point for each)</b>	<b>Score</b>
The health <b>and</b> environmental impact of providing information about <b>preventative measures</b> to <b>empower patients</b> to actively mitigate poorer health outcomes. (1 point)	0
The environmental impact of <b>pharmaceuticals</b> and over-prescribing as a cause of climate health harm. Alternatively teaching on <b>deprescribing</b> where possible and its environmental and health co-benefits would fulfil this metric. (1 point)	0

The health <b>and</b> environmental <b>co-benefits</b> of <b>non-pharmaceutical management</b> 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
<b>Waste production</b> within healthcare <b>clinics</b> and strategies for reducing waste in clinical activities (e.g. single use items in the inpatient or outpatient setting). (1 point)	1
The health <b>and</b> environmental co-benefits of avoiding <b>over-investigation</b> and/or <b>over-treatment</b> . (1 point)	0
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> Waste production, including how to sustainably manage, recycle and repurpose equipment, was covered briefly in a lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the Role of Occupational Therapy.”</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i> Ensure climate &amp; sustainability lectures include the above components relating to sustainable clinical practice.</p>	

<b>1.18. Does your <u>occupational therapy department’s</u> curriculum discuss the benefits and process of how to sustainably manage, recycle and repurpose prescribed equipment?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> This topic was covered in the June 2025 lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the Role of Occupational Therapy”. Seven slides in the lecture were dedicated to talking about resource stewardship, ethical equipment prescription, circular practice and a Whole Life Cycle approach to assistive equipment was discussed which covered the benefits and process of how to sustainably manage, recycle and repurpose prescribed equipment. External resources were provided in the lecture as well regarding sustainable use of equipment.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i> Ensure this lecture becomes a permanent part of the core curriculum. Further, this topic can be integrated into practical courses that cover functional mobility and equipment prescription, such as “Occupation in Practice I: Foundation of Occupational Therapy Assessment and Intervention,” “Occupation in Practice II: Advancing Theory, Assessment and Intervention,” and “Occupation in Practice III: Occupational Therapy Assessment and Intervention” rather than as a standalone lecture.</p>	

**1.19. Does your occupational therapy department's curriculum address sustainability in regards to adaptations and environmental adjustments in the home and in communal spaces?**

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:*

At the University of British Columbia, students learned about and discussed adaptations and environmental adjustments. First year students have a home modification module that covers adaptations in the home and in communal spaces. Second year students learned about and discussed recommendations for sustainable adaptations and environmental adjustments based on different climate impacts are covered in the lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the Role of Occupational Therapy”.

*Recommendations:*

Ensure the climate change lecture becomes a permanent part of the core curriculum. Further, incorporate recommendations for sustainable adaptations and environmental adjustments into the home modification module rather than as a stand alone lecture to deepen content engagement.

### *Curriculum: Clinical Applications*

**1.20. In training for patient encounters, does your occupational therapy department's 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:

2

*Score explanation:*

The lecture titled “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the Role of Occupational Therapy” covers coping strategies to share with clients experiencing climate distress. The lecture also touches upon different recommendations to suggest to clients to address health effects based on different climate events. The faculty also

included optional readings about climate change, eco-anxiety, and occupational therapy in OSOT 525 “Occupation in Practice II: Advancing Theory, Assessment & Intervention”.

There is also a section in a Psychosocial Rehabilitation module in the course OSOT 525 “Occupation in Practice II: Advancing Theory, Assessment & Intervention” that provides optional readings about climate change, eco-anxiety, and occupational therapy. A worksheet was provided that explores hope in facing daily challenges related to eco-anxiety.

*Recommendations:*

Ensure this lecture is a permanent part of the core curriculum. Further, incorporate this topic into OSOT 515 “Occupation in Practice I: Foundation of Occupational Therapy and Assessment” and OSOT 525 “Occupation in Practice II: Advancing Theory, Assessment & Intervention” rather than as a stand alone lecture.

**1.21. In training for patient encounters, does your occupational therapy department’s curriculum introduce strategies and OT models to take a holistic history of health experiences which consider environmental factors during an initial assessment?**

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:

0

*Score explanation:*

This topic was not covered in the Master of Occupational Therapy Curriculum.

*Recommendations:*

Consider including information and education around the importance of taking a holistic environmental history during initial interviews with clients. This could involve teaching students about the environmental risk factors to look out for, various environmental hazards clients may be exposed to, and what specific questions to ask when inquiring about environmental history (place of residence over the life course, occupational history, food and water sources, exposure to air pollution, etc.). Key areas of education could include pesticides, asbestos, lead, and an in-depth exploration of climate-change focused hazards like wildfire smoke exposure, air pollution, and mould exposure after flooding.

**1.22. In training for quality improvement (QI) projects, does your occupational therapy department’s curriculum discuss how planetary health concerns relate to wider healthcare service aims and outline the means to embed sustainability considerations into QI projects?**

Yes, sustainable QI teaching and/or project opportunities are incorporated into the **core** curriculum. (2 points)

Yes, sustainable QI teaching and/or project opportunities are available through <b>elective</b> modules. (1 point)	
No, sustainable QI teaching and/or project opportunities are <b>not</b> available to occupational therapy. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> No sustainable QI teaching and/or project opportunities were available in the occupational therapy curriculum this year.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i> Discuss planetary health concerns and how to deliver sustainable healthcare. Support and encourage students to explore QI project opportunities.</p>	

***Curriculum: Administrative Support for Planetary Health***

<b>1.23. Is your <u>occupational therapy department</u> currently in the process of implementing or improving Education for Sustainable Healthcare (ESH)/planetary health education?</b>	
Yes, the occupational therapy school is currently in the process of making <b>major</b> improvements to ESH/planetary health education. (4 points)	
Yes, the occupational school is currently in the process of making <b>minor</b> improvements to ESH/planetary health education. (2 point)	
No, there are <b>no</b> improvements to planetary health education in progress. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	4
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> The Department of Occupational Science &amp; Occupational Therapy at UBC was provided a Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (TLEF) in 2025-2026 for “Implementing Climate and Sustainability Education in Occupational Therapy Programs”. The project emphasizes longitudinal integration through the mapping and planned integration of content across twelve courses rather than relying on standalone lectures. Opportunities for integrating content in multiple courses are continuing to be identified by faculty members and currently, the project is evaluating and providing recommendations for content in the following courses pending for Fall 2026: OSOT 511 and OSOT 513. The project will also hire a student advisor to provide recommendations that enhance student engagement and ensure planetary health education materials remain relevant to their learning needs, but will start after the period assessed (February 17, 2025- February 17, 2026).</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i> Continue improving Education for Sustainable Healthcare (ESH) and planetary health education within the occupational therapy program, honouring the commitment represented by the TLEF and taking opportunities to incorporate content about climate change and sustainable healthcare in class</p>	

discussions and activities. Review feedback from this report and identify potential action items for planning and implementation.

**1.24. How well are the aforementioned planetary health/Education for Sustainable Healthcare topics integrated longitudinally into the core curriculum?**

Planetary health/ESH topics are **well integrated** into the core occupational therapy school curriculum. (6 points)

**Some** planetary health/ESH topics are appropriately integrated into the core occupational therapy student curriculum. (4 points)

Planetary health/ESH is not integrated and is primarily addressed in **(a) standalone lecture(s)**. (2 point)

There is **minimal/no** education for sustainable healthcare. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*Score explanation:*

The topics are covered in two stand-alone lectures in the core curriculum, “Climate Disaster Toolkit for Vulnerable Communities” and “OT Practice on a Changing Planet: Climate Change, Planetary, Ecological, and Human Health and the Role of Occupational Therapy”. Integration of more planetary health topics into the core curriculum is currently in the works for the following year.

*Recommendations:*

Continue with the integration of planetary health and sustainable healthcare topics across the core curriculum.

**1.25. Does your occupational therapy department 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 **occupational therapy school** has a specific faculty/staff member responsible for overseeing curricular integration of planetary health and sustainable healthcare. (1 point)

**No**, the **occupational therapy school** does **not** have a specific faculty/staff member responsible for overseeing curricular integration of planetary health and sustainable healthcare. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

0

*Score explanation:*

The Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy department doesn't have a specific faculty member taking responsibility for incorporating planetary health and sustainable healthcare into the curriculum. However, the department head leads the TLEF initiative for implementing climate and sustainable healthcare education in the UBC Master of Occupational Therapy program. The department head also oversees a PhD student in the OSOT department that holds a dedicated

planetary health content development role and delivered the October 2025 lecture. Further, there are a few other members of the faculty that are greatly involved in advancing these initiatives within their teaching and professional roles, with dedicated focus on climate action in occupational therapy. The June 2025 lecture on planetary health from the course “Developing Evidence for Occupational Therapy Practice” was delivered by one such faculty member.

*Recommendations:*

Employ a member of the faculty to take on the incorporation of planetary health and sustainable healthcare as a theme throughout the course. Further, provide more opportunities for students to collaborate with the dedicated faculty members surrounding planetary health integration into the core curriculum.

**1.26. 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:

3

*Score explanation:*

The course “Societal and Environmental Influences on Occupation and Occupational Therapy Practice” discusses the current legislative, socio-political, economic, cultural, and service delivery issues impacting occupational therapy practice. This course aims to equip occupational therapy students with a foundational understanding of the structural and systemic influences on clients’ health and occupations.

Learning objectives for this course include:

- Analysing the interconnectedness between the environment and occupational therapy
- Critiquing local and regional policy
- Analysing how funding shapes practice and occupational possibilities
- Discussing various ideologies and their influence on structural and social determinants of health
- Engaging in systems level thinking and developing a critical perspective informed by values of global citizenship, human rights, and social justice

Students additionally engage in “Small Group Tutorials” to discuss intersectionality and the impact of discrimination and intersecting systems of oppression on individuals’ and communities’ occupational possibilities. Through case studies and reflection, occupational therapy students are challenged to envision how occupational therapists can provide leadership to advocate for change at the individual and systems levels.

Other civic engagement topics integrated throughout the curriculum include the role of occupational therapists in supporting individuals and communities with becoming housed and preventing homelessness and utilizing a community-led approach in program development.

*Recommendations:*

Integrate instruction and discussion on climate and environmental policies within Canada and provide additional education and mentorship on how occupational therapists can advocate for change in their practice and within systems.

**Section Total (51 out of 79)**

**64.6%**

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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.*

<b>2.1. Are there researchers engaged in planetary health research and healthcare sustainability research at your <u>institution</u>?</b>	
Yes, there are faculty members at the <b>institution</b> who have a <b>primary</b> research focus in planetary health <b>or</b> sustainable healthcare/vetcare. (3 points)	
Yes, there are individual faculty members at the <b>institution</b> who are conducting research <b>related</b> to planetary health or healthcare sustainability, <b>OR</b> 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 <b>institution</b> , but not specifically associated with healthcare/vetcare. (1 point)	
No, there are <b>no</b> planetary health and/or sustainability researchers at the <b>institution</b> at this time. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p>UBC has a research team called the <a href="#">UBC Planetary Healthcare Lab</a>, that has the primary research focus of planetary health and healthcare sustainability. They state that their goal is, “[to] not only examine the environmental effects of healthcare delivery and services in B.C., but generate solutions to chart a path forward to net zero emissions”. This initiative brings experts from diverse disciplines, such as engineering, economic, business, pharmaceutical sciences, together to determine best practices in healthcare and design sustainable interventions. They envision a health system that works for the best of both patient and planetary health.</p> <p>The Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy department has faculty members that are conducting planetary health research as it relates to occupational therapy practice. Recent research topics have included understanding the barriers to sustainable home modifications and adaptations and understanding the role of occupational therapists in climate change (Dr. Ben Mortenson, Tanya Fawkes, Giovanna Boniface, Jeff Boniface). Additionally, Dr. Julia Henderson completed a research study, <i>Intergenerational Arts for Climate Action</i>, exploring intergenerational conflict and ageism provoked through blame-assignment in public narratives of climate justice. Building on this work, two additional climate-focused projects are underway in 2025–2026. The first, “<i>Promoting the Circular Economy: Exploring Equipment Prescription Practices of Canadian Occupational Therapists</i>,” is being completed by MOT students Emma Fok, Adam Canete, and Nathan</p>	

Lirenman. The second project, “*Environmental Scan of Sustainable Practices in Technology-Based Occupational Therapy Interventions*,” is being conducted by MOT students Wenqi Zhang and Katherine Wang.

Additionally, members from other departments at UBC, such as Dr. Michael Brauer and Dr. Trevor Hancock from the School of Population and Public Health, are conducting research in environmental health. Dr. Michael Brauer’s research is focused on the effects of air pollution and climate change on health, while Dr. Trevor Hancock conducts research in public health, planetary health, and sustainable healthcare systems. These faculty members are within the School of Population and Public Health.

*Recommendations:*

No further recommendations at this time.

**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 points)

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

Score Assigned:

3

*Score explanation:*

UBC has an interdisciplinary planetary health research initiative by the Faculty of Medicine called the [Climate Change and Planetary Health Initiative](#). Articles from this initiative are published in Pathways, the award-winning, UBC Faculty of Medicine’s digital magazine. Some examples of the research topics include health equity, climate anxiety, childhood development, Indigenous lung health, emergency drone delivery, nutrition and respiratory health, climate change and disability, and hospital food. Dr. Ben Mortenson, from the university’s department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, is included in this initiative as we see in the article “[Putting Accessibility at the centre of climate action](#)”.

Additionally, UBC has created a new team of UBC and Vancouver Coastal Health researchers from various disciplines, forming the [Planetary Healthcare Lab](#). This team will explore the effects of healthcare delivery and services in BC on the environment to determine innovative solutions and work toward net zero emissions.

*Recommendations:*

No further recommendations at this time.

**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 points)

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

Score Assigned:

3

*Score explanation:*

We found evidence that demonstrates that UBC collaborates with communities that are disproportionately impacted by climate change towards research projects in some of the institution's departments. For example, the University of British Columbia's [UBC Planetary Healthcare Lab](#) is a founding partner of CASCADES, which engages in "Monthly Exchange Sessions" where folks from communities and researchers can "connect and discuss with others working to make Canadian healthcare more sustainable".

The university's Pulmonary Rehabilitation Research Laboratory is another example that demonstrates research is being done in collaboration with communities disproportionately affected by environmental injustice, for example the "Wildfire Smoke and Emergency Planning for First Nations People Living with Lung Disease in Remote and Rural British Columbia" research project. That being said, we did not find that UBC has a formal process for this collaboration and decision making for communities to provide input on research agendas at the institutional level.

UBC does, however, have the [Indigenous Research Support Initiative \(IRSI\)](#) that supports research partners based in academia and Indigenous communities to "co-develop a research framework that will support Indigenous, community-based research collaborations in order that they are reciprocal and respectful". While this does meet the criteria of having a process by which communities disproportionately impacted by climate change and environmental injustice give input or make decisions about the research agenda at the institution (hence we have awarded full points for this question) we acknowledge that Indigenous communities are not the only communities who can fall under this category outlined in the question.

*Recommendations:*

No further recommendations at this time.

**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:

1

*Score Explanation:*

UBC has an [UBC Sustainability](#) website which serves as a general hub for sustainability initiatives, including climate action and planetary health-related topics. The website provides a breadth of information on events, programs, research, and campus engagement regarding a variety of sustainability initiatives. Due to the quantity of information and resources, navigating the website can be challenging.

In addition, climate focused events, opportunities, and projects at UBC can also be found on the [UBC Climate Hub](#) website, which is a student-led initiative that highlights student and faculty efforts in climate action and research.

While both sites provide comprehensive resources related to health and the environment, they are not specific to planetary health initiatives.

*Recommendations:*

The previously mentioned webpages should continue to update the resources, project and events presented to accurately reflect current initiatives. The sites, especially UBC sustainability, would benefit from some re-structuring that organizes the research and resources into tabs that highlight specific sustainability initiatives, such as a tab that directs and allows the public to easily access all planetary health related initiatives.

**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 <b>institution</b> has hosted a conference on topics related to planetary health / sustainable healthcare/vetcare in the past three years. (2 points)	
The <b>institution</b> has not hosted any conferences directly, but they have provided financial support for a local planetary health event. (1 point)	
No, the <b>institution</b> 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>  On October 25th, 2025, UBC's Climate Solutions Research Collective hosted a full day conference titled <a href="#">UBC CPD: Planetary Health Emergency: The Health Benefits of Climate Action</a>. This conference was established as a continued professional development opportunity for healthcare professionals, highlighting the actions that can be taken in practice to advance human and planetary health. At this conference, attendees were able to connect with peers, obtain practical ideas for action in different contexts, and hear about local initiatives from expert speakers. For those who are unable to attend in-person, lectures were recorded and made available to view on-demand for 3 months after the event date.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i>  We encourage UBC to continue hosting conferences and symposiums that focus on planetary health. We encourage members of the Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy department to participate in these events.</p>	

<b>2.6. Is your <u>institution</u> a member of a national or international planetary health or ESH/ESV organisation?</b>	
Yes, the institution is a member of a national or international planetary health <b>or</b> ESH/ESV organisation. (1 points)	
No, the institution is <b>not</b> a member of such an organisation. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score Explanation:</i>  The University of British Columbia is a member of <a href="#">The Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH)</a>, which is engaged in addressing global health challenges.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i>  No further recommendations at this time.</p>	

<b>Section Total (15 out of 17)</b>	<b>88.2%</b>
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## Community Outreach and Advocacy

***Section Overview:*** This section evaluates a schools 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.

<b>3.1. Does your <u>institution</u> partner with community organisations to promote planetary and health?</b>	
Yes, the <b>institution</b> meaningfully partners with <b>multiple</b> community organisations to promote planetary and environmental health. (3 points)	
Yes, the <b>institution</b> meaningfully partners with <b>one</b> community organisation to promote planetary and environmental health. (2 points)	
The <b>institution</b> does not partner with community organisations, but participates in community focused events relating to planetary health. (1 point)	
No, there is <b>no</b> such meaningful community partnership. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <p>The UBC Sustainability Hub collaborated with various internal and community partners during UBC’s annual <a href="#">Climate Emergency Week</a>, hosting events focused on engaging with climate justice and action at UBC and beyond. Additionally, the UBC Sustainability Hub collaborates with partners in the surrounding community in projects such as the ongoing Youth Climate Ambassador Project and the Climate for Kids education project. Details on these projects and community partners can be found <a href="#">here</a>. Lastly, the <a href="#">UBC Reads Sustainability</a> project brings well-known sustainability authors, including <a href="#">Suzanne Simard</a>, <a href="#">John Vaillant</a>, and <a href="#">Rueben George</a>, to UBC to engage in discussion.</p> <p><a href="#">The Climate Equity, Action, and Resilience (CLEAR) project</a> is a partnership between the UBC Sustainability Hub, UBC Learning Exchange, and multiple organizations within the Downtown Eastside, an equity deserving community in Vancouver. This initiative works to make climate change related research more accessible, create collaborative climate-related projects, and support residents and organizations to advocate for just climate policy and action.</p> <p>Campus as a Living Lab, an initiative that integrates university resources, operations, infrastructure, and academic capacity to address complex sustainability challenges partners with public sector and private industry organisations to address sustainability challenges. A list of partners is available on the Campus as a Living Lab <a href="#">website</a>.</p>	

Additionally, the UBC Faculty of Medicine is partnered with Pathways to Equitable Healthy Cities, a research initiative focused on the intersections of inequity, population health, and environmental sustainability. This collaboration underscores a global commitment to advancing research in planetary health.

*Recommendations:*

Provide and facilitate more leadership opportunities for students and occupational therapists or other allied health professionals to incorporate planetary health into clinical education placements to promote community collaboration and engagement. Faculty from the Master of Occupational Therapy program have announced an upcoming student placement in collaboration with the OT Climate Action Network which will take place outside the period assessed (February 17, 2025-February 17, 2026).

We encourage UBC to seek out additional partnerships with Indigenous communities and other communities disproportionately impacted by climate change to build equitable, collaborative relationships and advocate for change together.

**3.2. Does your institution 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

*Score explanation:*

The UBC Sustainability Hub is run by UBC staff and offers various events throughout the year to engage students, community partners, and the general public in climate action and discourse, including UBC’s annual Climate Emergency Week, the “Climate Justice” educational series, delegations to the annual COP climate treaty meeting, sustainability activities at CIRS (Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability), and the speaker series UBC Reads Sustainability. [SDG Month Canada](#) at UBC hosted events throughout the month of March to increase awareness of and engagement with the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

As well, UBC Sustainability also offers programs for students to engage in climate leadership in the community, including the [Sustainability Ambassadors Program](#), the [Sustainability Scholars Program](#), and the [Catalyst Program](#).

*Recommendations:*

Organize community events that focus more specifically on healthcare sustainability and occupational therapy, facilitated through the Faculty of Medicine or the Master of Occupational Therapy program. While this suggestion does not affect the current score, it would enhance UBC's engagement by complementing the institution's existing involvement in numerous community-facing events related to planetary health throughout the year.

**3.3. Does your institution 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

*Score explanation:*

UBC communicates issues related to planetary health through various channels, including UBC Sustainability's Newsletter which provides updates on sustainability-related events, courses, research, internships, funding, volunteering, and other opportunities. UBC students can sign up for this newsletter as well as newsletters to receive information about the on-campus farm ([The UBC Farm Newsletter](#)) and campus and community planning related to climate action ([Campus + Community Planning Newsletter](#)).

The Faculty of Medicine publishes an online magazine called [Pathways](#), which highlights biomedical innovations and explores the impact of climate change on health. Pathways is accessible to anyone through a free online subscription. Additionally, UBC's broadcast emails, which do not require a subscription, can include discussions on sustainability as part of their regular updates.

*Recommendations:*

Send out more emails directly connecting healthcare and sustainability related to occupational therapy for students.

**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 <b>institution</b> or <b>main affiliated hospital trust</b> offers one course relating to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare for post-graduate provider. (1 point)	
There are <b>no</b> such accessible courses for post-graduate providers. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>            UBC’s Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program within the Faculty of Medicine offered one climate change-related course titled “Navigating Climate Change: Perspectives from Indigenous Providers” in November 2024. This course was specifically designed for healthcare professionals and the webinar continues to be accessible to view on their <a href="#">website</a>.</p> <p>As well, on October 25, 2025, UBC CPD held its annual “<a href="#">Planetary Health Emergency</a>” conference to connect health professionals and engage in discussion around advancement in human and planetary health.</p> <p>The Learning Hub, an online platform accessible to students, volunteers, and employees in major health authorities across BC, offers several courses focused on planetary health. For instance, the course “Orientation to Sustainable Health Systems” explores the connections between climate change, health, and healthcare systems. Another course, “Eco-Anxiety and Climate Distress,” provides information on recognizing signs of climate distress, integrating coping strategies into practice, and building community resilience. These courses can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>UBC Extended Learning offers a 10-week online course called “<a href="#">Climate Action Planning: Foundations, Finance and Implementation</a>” which focuses on equipping participants with the knowledge and skills to kickstart climate action where they work. This course is offered to anyone, including UBC alumni. The last course began October 8, 2025.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i>            Include more courses or resources for post-grad occupational therapists that connect climate change to the scope of occupational therapy.</p>	

<b>3.5. Does your <u>institution</u> or its <u>affiliated teaching hospitals</u> have accessible educational materials for patients about environmental health exposures?</b>	
Yes, the <b>institution</b> or <b>all affiliated hospitals</b> have accessible educational materials for patients. (2 points)	
<b>Some</b> affiliated hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients. (1 point)	
<b>No</b> affiliated medical centres have accessible educational materials for patients. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<i>Score explanation:</i>	

UBC Master of Occupational Therapy students may complete fieldwork placements in clinical teaching sites within health authorities in British Columbia, such as:

- Fraser Health Authority (FHA)
- Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH)
- Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)
- Northern Health Authority
- First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)
- Island Health
- Interior Health

These sites offer various resources to educate patients about environmental health exposures. Materials, such as pamphlets and brochures, address topics like extreme heat, smoke exposure, sun safety, and the impact of heat on medications and mental health. Specific resources include:

FHA:

- [Brochures and infographics](#) targeting specific populations (older adults, children etc.) regarding extreme weather.

VCH:

- Has a dedicated team for [Healthy Environments and Climate Change](#), that provides resources and education to clients on weather and climate topics such as air quality.

PHSA:

- Has online printable [resources](#) for clients on floods, wildfires, smoke and extreme heat.
- [Mental Health Disaster Toolkit](#) to navigate mental health and substance use disorders during extreme weather events.

Northern Health Authority:

- Has online resources linking multiple health exposures, such as wildfire smoke, water quality, and extreme heat events. This set of resources can be found [here](#).

Island Health:

- Provides information on the health impacts of wildfires, drought and flooding, as well as heat and cold weather safety. These resources can be found [here](#).

FNHA:

- Provides multiple resources on their website related to drinking water safety, extreme heat, environmental contaminants, and wildfires, these can be found [here](#).

Interior Health:

- Published a Climate Change, Health, and Well-Being Report and a Heat Response Planning for Southern Interior BC Communities toolkit. These resources can be found [here](#).

*Recommendations:*

Increase collaboration between students and clinical teaching sites in creating resources that link Occupational Therapy to environmental health exposures.

**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 <b>institution</b> or <b>all affiliated hospitals</b> 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:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i> Several health authorities that may oversee students' clinical placements offer resources that provide clients with information on health impacts of climate change.</p> <p>FHA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers a resource created by Health Canada overviewing <a href="#">changing health and climate change</a> and information on impacts of <a href="#">extreme weather on health</a>.</li> </ul> <p>VCH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a resource linking the impacts of climate change on air quality and health found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>Resources linking health impacts of climate change and community health available <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul> <p>FHA and VCH collaborated to create:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Climate Change and Health Adaptation Framework</a></li> <li>Climate Change and Health Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment Summary to address the health impacts of climate change, found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul> <p>FNHA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has several resources linked through their Indigenous Climate Health Action Plan linked <a href="#">here</a> and <a href="#">here</a> that addresses impacts of climate change on health.</li> </ul> <p>Interior Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produced the "<a href="#">Climate Change, Health and Wellbeing Report</a>" which outlines health impacts of climate change.</li> <li>Provides a webpage clients can navigate to explore multiple impacts of climate change hazards available <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Island Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created the report titled "<a href="#">Strengthening Health and Resilience in Changing Climate</a>" which outlines tools to strengthen climate resilience through adaptive capacity.</li> </ul> <p>PHSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has information on how climate change impacts health through the <a href="#">BC Centre for Disease Control</a> site.</li> </ul> <p>Northern Health Authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Published a report on the health impacts of climate change available <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>	

<b>Section Total (13 out of 14)</b>	<b>92.9%</b>
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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 <b>institution</b> offer support for students interested in enacting a sustainability initiative/QI project?	
Yes, the <b>institution</b> <i>either</i> offers grants for students to enact sustainability initiatives/QI projects <i>or</i> sustainability QI projects are part of the core curriculum. (2 points)	
The <b>institution</b> encourages sustainability QI projects (to fulfil clerkship or longitudinal requirements) and offers resources to help students succeed in these projects, <b>but</b> 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>            UBC offers the <a href="#">AMS sustainability project fund</a>, which can provide up to \$20,000 in funding towards student-led projects that encourage environmental, social and economic sustainability within the UBC community. The six types of projects funded are student empowerment, education &amp; awareness, community organizing, operations, advocacy, and info-sharing &amp; partnerships.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i>            No further recommendations for UBC at this time.</p>	

4.2. Does your <b>institution</b> offer opportunities for students to do research related to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare/vetcare?	
The <b>institution</b> has a <b>specific</b> 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 <b>require student initiative</b> to seek these out and carry them out in their spare time. (1 point)	
There are <b>no opportunities</b> for students to engage in planetary health/sustainable healthcare research. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p>	

The [Sustainability Scholars program](#) is open to all graduate students at UBC and offers students the opportunity for a paid summer fellowship under the guidance of a mentor on an applied research project related to sustainability. Previous projects related to planetary health include “Extreme Heat Exposure and Vulnerability Mapping for Mainland Coast Salish First Nations” and “Environmental Impacts and Innovations in Long-Term Care Facility Design and Operation”.

The UBC Master of Occupational Therapy program includes an independent research project. This project may be related to planetary health/sustainable healthcare, depending on what research topics are being offered at that time. Current projects underway include “Environmental Scan of Sustainable Practices in Technology-Based Occupational Therapy Interventions” and “Exploring Equipment Prescription Practices of Canadian Occupational Therapists: Making Assistive Technology More Sustainable in Occupational Therapy”.

*Recommendations:*

No further recommendations for UBC at this time. It is recommended that the program continue supporting this type of research in student projects, and work on incorporating multiple planetary health research Capstone projects every year for students to participate in.

**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:*

The UBC Sustainability Hub offers a [website](#) where students are able to access a list of researchers involved in sustainability projects, however this requires initiative on the part of the students. From there they can refine their search by entering in keywords such as “health”, and view a list of researchers many of whom are involved in sustainability research projects related to health or healthcare.

The Master of Occupational Therapy program offers no such page at this time, however students can easily access the Sustainability Hub website via online search.

*Recommendations:*

UBC would benefit from refining their sustainability researcher list by category and adding a category titled “Planetary Healthcare” so that students may more easily access research topics of interest by category. Creating categories would ensure that students would be able to browse

through research initiatives and topics in a systematic manner and be exposed to more opportunities.

**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:

1

*Score explanation:*

The [Planetary Health Club](#) is a student-run initiative open to all students at the university dedicated to connecting environmental sustainability with public health through educational events and advocacy. Certain clubs are offered within the Medical program at UBC (e.g., [UBC Enviromed Club](#)) that organize events on campus and promote advocacy for planetary health within student bodies, however these clubs are only open to medical students. There are many other student groups focused on sustainability, but most are not planetary health specific.

*Recommendations:*

Continue to support and promote the Planetary Health Club as an accessible space for students to engage with planetary health issues and get involved in advocacy projects on campus.

**4.5. Is there a student liaison representing sustainability interests who serves on a department or institutional decision-making council to advocate for curriculum reform and/or sustainability best practices?**

Yes, there is a student representative that serves on a department or institutional decision-making council/committee. (1 points)

No, there is no such student representative. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

*Score explanation:*

The AMS (Alma Mater Society) VP of Sustainability is a student who sits on the [UBC Sustainability Hub Advisory Committee](#) and is involved in planning and implementing sustainability initiatives in UBC's academic and operational systems.

UBC also has a [student sustainability advisory council](#) composed of students from various sustainability groups across campus. These students partner with the Sustainability Hub, who works alongside the Provost, to increase sustainability representation within the institution. There is currently a PhD student within the department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy who is conducting a systematic review on OT education in climate & sustainability and is exploring the involvement of Masters program students in this work.

*Recommendations:*

No further recommendations for UBC as an institution. Continued involvement of students in curriculum renewal, specifically in incorporating sustainability practices and planetary health considerations into core curriculum of the program, would be extremely valuable.

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.	0
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><u>Organic agriculture:</u> The <a href="#">UBC Farm Practicum</a> is a summer internship that provides students with the opportunity to work in UBC’s farm and learn about sustainable food systems. This program promotes food justice and food sovereignty through hands-on education, encouraging the production of healthy food through sustainable methods.</p> <p><u>Panels/speaker series:</u> UBC offers a webinar titled “<a href="#">Climate Change and Planetary Health: Challenges and Opportunities for Physicians and Healthcare</a>” where experts speak about healthcare professionals’ roles in climate action and sustainable methods of practice.</p> <p><u>Environmental justice events:</u> UBC offered an event titled “<a href="#">Community Climate Justice Forum</a>”, where students could attend to hear from UBC researchers and Downtown Eastside community advocates about new findings related to extreme heat, housing, health, and urban greening.</p> <p><u>Cultural art events:</u> There currently does not exist any cultural arts events, installations, or performances related to planetary health at UBC.</p>	

Local volunteer opportunities: Students are able to volunteer for the [Center for Sustainable Food Systems](#) at UBC farm, where they can choose between multiple volunteer programs including growing food, supporting the harvest, and building community, to help the program succeed in their vision of developing resilient, thriving, and socially just food systems.

Wilderness/outdoors programs: UBC runs a [Varsity Outdoors Club](#), where students who join as members can sign up for various outdoors activities (cross country skiing, ice climbing, etc) and overnight trips (ski trips, mountaineering, avalanche training).

At this time the UBC Master's of Occupational Therapy program does not offer any co-curricular planetary health programs in these domains.

*Recommendations:*

UBC has made great progress at initiating programs and opportunities outside of the core curriculum for students to get involved in planetary health. UBC should work to offer more speaker series and environmental justice community-led initiatives surrounding the topic of planetary health, cultural arts events that are related to planetary health.

<b>Section Total (12 out of 15)</b>	<b>80%</b>
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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 <b>at least one designated staff member</b> 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 <b>no specific staff member</b> in charge of hospital sustainability. (2 points)	
There are <b>no salaried sustainability staff</b> , but there is a sustainability task force or committee. (1 point)	
There are <b>no</b> staff members <b>or</b> task force responsible for overseeing campus sustainability. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>            At UBC there is an <a href="#">Office of Sustainability</a>. It is a staff unit on the portfolio of UBC's provost with multiple full-time staff organizing various initiatives, programs, and events across campus. The <a href="#">Advisory Committee</a> of UBC sustainability includes a clinical assistant professor in the school of population and public health. Additionally, there are <a href="#">8 sustainability coordinators in the UBC School of Medicine</a> from various departments. The head of the Occupational Therapy program is aware of the opportunity of appointing one of their faculty members to the sustainability coordinator role and appears interested in pursuing this possibility.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i>            Appoint a faculty member from the School of Occupational Therapy to the sustainability coordinator role in the UBC Faculty of Medicine and/or the UBC Sustainability Advisory Committee.</p>	

5.2. How ambitious is your <u>institution's</u> plan to reduce its own carbon footprint?
The institution has a <b>written and approved plan</b> to achieve carbon neutrality by <b>2030</b> (5 points)
The institution has a <b>written and approved plan</b> to achieve carbon neutrality by <b>2040</b> (3 points)

The institution has a stated goal of carbon neutrality by <b>2040</b> but has <b>not created a plan</b> to reach that goal or the <b>plan is inadequate</b> (1 point)	
The institution does <b>not</b> meet any of the requirements listed above (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>          UBC Vancouver is committed to net-zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2035 in accordance with the <a href="#">Paris Agreement</a>, and this encompasses the Occupational Therapy department. One step towards this goal is achieving 85% reduction in operational emissions by 2030. These goals are expressed in UBC's Climate Action Plan 2030 (<a href="#">CAP 2030</a>). Progress towards the CAP 2030 goals can be found on the <a href="#">CAP 2030 Progress Dashboard</a>.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i>          Uphold the commitments of the Climate Action Plan and implement the necessary measures to achieve a 100% reduction in GHG emissions by 2035.</p>	

<b>5.3. Do buildings/infrastructure used by the institution for teaching (not including the hospital) utilize renewable energy?</b>	
Yes, institution buildings are <b>100%</b> powered by renewable energy. (3 points)	
Institution buildings source <b>&gt;80%</b> of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (2 points)	
Institution buildings source <b>&gt;20%</b> of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (1 point)	
Institution buildings source <b>&lt;20%</b> of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>          Data for UBC's use of renewable energy is not yet publicly available for 2025, however in 2024 the institution reported <a href="#">electricity, biomass, and renewable natural gas</a> provided a combined 63% of campus energy, with the remaining 37% coming from natural gas. Electricity at UBC is provided primarily by BC Hydro, which supplies energy that is <a href="#">98% from renewable sources</a>, namely hydroelectricity. UBC reports that (as of 2017), 25% of the university's thermal needs are generated by the <a href="#">Bioenergy Research Demonstration Facility (BRDF)</a> using renewable biomass sourced from urban wood waste. Most hot water and heating comes from the <a href="#">Academic District Energy System (ADES)</a>, and UBC has also implemented a low carbon <a href="#">Neighbourhood District Energy System (NDES)</a> to replace the mix of natural gas and electricity traditionally used (these systems aim to utilize <a href="#">100% low-carbon sources</a> by 2030).</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i>          UBC to uphold their commitments in the Climate Action Plan to utilize 100% renewable energy sources by 2030.</p>	

**5.4. Are sustainable building practices utilised for new and old buildings on the institution's 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

*Score explanation:*

Between 2001 and 2008, UBC carried out [ECOTrek](#), retrofitting 288 academic buildings to reduce energy and water consumption, at the time marked as the largest energy retrofit to occur on a Canadian campus. Since 2008, [all new buildings](#) and renovations at UBC are mandated to be (at minimum) gold LEED certified. UBC's [Green Building Action Plan](#) outlines a pathway to ensure that UBC's buildings achieve net positive contributions to human and natural systems by 2035. It provides information and guidance for the design and construction of new buildings, renovations and retrofits that will align with this goal. UBC has also optimized energy usage through its [Building Tune-Ups program](#), using energy usage data to reprogram/schedule energy use to reflect actual occupancy and needs.

*Recommendations:*

Uphold design considerations in accordance with the Green Building Action Plan for future construction projects, renovations, and retrofits.

**5.5. Has the institution implemented strategies to encourage and provide environmentally-friendly transportation options for students and reduce the environmental impact of commuting?**

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)

The institution has implemented **some** strategies to provide environmentally-friendly transportation options, but the options are **unsatisfactorily** accessible or advertised. (1 point)

The institution has **not** implemented strategies to encourage and provide environmentally-friendly transportation options. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

2

*Score explanation:*

The University of British Columbia subsidizes transit passes for UBC students in Vancouver and includes the transit pass within the university’s student fees. Information about carbon-friendly commuting options is readily available on UBC’s [plan your commute page](#) through the U-Pass BC program. As of 2022, public transit and biking represented 50% of travel to UBC campus according to their [Transportation Status Report](#). It should be noted that public transit usage since the COVID-19 pandemic may be affected by ongoing avoidance of transit due to COVID-19 worries and Vancouver’s ongoing overcapacity concern on many public transit routes. Additionally, the UBC Vancouver campus itself supports cycling infrastructure, including bike lanes, traffic-slowed/pedestrian priority zones, and an E-bike subsidy and rental program for students. UBC also offers [13 free bike cages around campus](#), as well as access to secure bike lockers should students wish to rent a locker for the year. The school also piloted a [monitored bike valet program](#) in the fall of 2024 to increase the security of bicycle and micro-mobility parking at UBC.

*Recommendations:*

Extend sustainable transit measures to the UBC North, Fraser, Victoria, and Okanagan campuses.

**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:

2

*Score explanation:*

The University of British Columbia diverts waste into four streams - food scraps (compost), containers (plastic, metal, glass), paper, and garbage, found in every UBC building. Each stream is clearly labelled, and further information can be found on the [UBC Sort It Out page](#), which includes accessible information about signage and what materials go in each bin, as well as the “A-Z Recyclopedia,” and a “Sort It Out” waste sorting online game. All food waste has been taken to an [off campus recycler](#) since January 2022, when UBC decommissioned their on-campus composter due to aging infrastructure and costly maintenance. All garbage and non-recyclables are taken to the Vancouver transfer station, and recyclables are taken to specialist facilities around Metro Vancouver.

*Recommendations:*

- Re-commission the on-site composter to reduce emissions used to transport compost.
- Expand student education (e-learning course) of waste separation and use of recycling bins to ensure effective use of the bins.

**5.7. Does the institution apply sustainability criteria when making decisions about the campus**

<b>food and beverage selections (e.g. local sourcing, reduced meat, decreased plastic packaging)?</b>	
Yes, the institution has <b>adequate</b> sustainability requirements for food and beverages, including meat-free days or no red-meat, and <b>is engaged</b> in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (3 points)	
There are sustainability guidelines for food and beverages, but they are <b>insufficient or optional</b> . The institution <b>is engaged</b> in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (2 points)	
There are sustainability guidelines for food and beverages, but they are <b>insufficient or optional</b> . The institution is <b>not</b> engaged in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (1 point)	
There are <b>no</b> sustainability guidelines for food and beverages. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  There are extensive food sustainability initiatives at UBC including <a href="#">Climate-Friendly Food (CFF) Labels</a> (providing info about a meal’s environmental impact), a <a href="#">Centre for Sustainable Food Systems</a> at UBC Farm, and a guide to <a href="#">sustainable food options</a> on campus. UBC uses <a href="#">100% OceanWise sustainable seafood</a> and has been a <a href="#">Fair Trade Campus</a> since 2011, however it does not currently have any guidelines or regulations around red-meat consumption on campus. UBC outlines food services as high contributors to global GHG emissions. In accordance with their CAP 2030 initiative, they aim to achieve a <a href="#">50% GHG emission reduction</a> of food systems by 2030.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i>  Include campus-wide measures to reduce meat consumption, further promotion of plant-based food availability and affordability.</p>	

<b>5.8. Does the <u>institution</u> apply sustainability criteria when making decisions about supply procurement?</b>	
Yes, the institution has <b>adequate</b> sustainability requirements for supply procurement <b>and is engaged</b> in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (3 points)	
There are sustainability guidelines for supply procurement, but they are <b>insufficient or optional</b> . The institution is <b>engaged</b> in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (2 points)	
There are sustainability guidelines for supply procurement, but they are <b>insufficient or optional</b> . The institution is <b>not engaged</b> in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (1 point)	
There are <b>no</b> sustainability guidelines for supply procurement. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  UBC Financial Operations apply <a href="#">sustainability vision goals to all UBC business decisions</a> affecting the supply of goods and services for operational needs and related transactions. UBC offers priority to suppliers who are committed to sustainability and circular economy practices by having prospective organizations demonstrate their ability to help UBC achieve each of their sustainability</p>	

goals as part of the [Zero Waste Action Plan](#). UBC suppliers must adhere to the following regulations regarding sustainability (taken from the [Supplier's Code of Conduct](#)):

- Ensure all waste materials, as a by-product of production, are disposed of properly in an environmentally responsible manner, and according to the local and international laws and regulations.
- Seek out leading industry practices aimed at conserving natural resources and reducing carbon emissions.
- Commit to packaging standards that reduce the amount of materials used or have a recycled content with a minimum of 30% post consumer waste content.
- Ensure compliance with third party, bona fide, local and international standards for materials and ethical conduct.

UBC claims to have a Sustainable Purchasing guide available to students and staff, however the page is not currently accessible.

*Recommendations:*

Create written, specific, and mandatory sustainable supply procurement guidelines. We also suggest updating links to policy around supply procurement decision making or public access and transparency.

**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:

1

*Score explanation:*

Recommendations on how to “[green your event](#)” exist and are readily available through UBC Sustainability, including a [zero waste events guidelines checklist](#). However, the recommendations are not mandatory. [General event guidelines](#) exist on UBC websites, but do not contain any considerations for sustainability.

*Recommendations:*

Create mandatory sustainable event guidelines

**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 <b>guidelines</b> on how to make lab spaces more environmentally sustainable, but not programs or initiatives. (1 point)	
There are <b>no</b> efforts at the institution to make lab spaces more sustainable. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>            UBC's "<a href="#">Green your lab</a>" program includes guidelines and education opportunities about how to make lab spaces more environmentally sustainable, including recommendations around reducing waste, conserving energy and water, building a green team, green purchasing, and funding opportunities for green initiatives in lab spaces. UBC Sustainability also heads the "<a href="#">Sustainability Coordinators Program</a>," which creates paid positions for researchers to encourage adoption of sustainable practices in labs and inform their departments on approaches, procedures, and policies to minimize their environmental impact.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i>            No further recommendations at this time.</p>	

5.11. Does your <u>institution's</u> endowment portfolio investments include fossil-fuel companies?	
The institution is <b>entirely divested</b> from fossil fuels <b>and</b> has made a <b>commitment to reinvest divested funds</b> into renewable energy companies or renewable energy campus initiatives. (4 points)	
The institution is <b>entirely divested</b> from fossil fuels. (3 points)	
The institution has <b>partially divested</b> from fossil fuel companies <b>or</b> has made a <b>commitment to fully divest</b> , but <b>currently</b> still has fossil fuel investments. (2 points)	
The institution has <b>not divested</b> from fossil-fuel companies, but faculty and/or students are <b>conducting organised advocacy</b> for divestment. (1 point)	
Yes, the institution has investments with fossil-fuel companies and there have been <b>no efforts</b> to change that. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>            UBC <a href="#">Committed to full divestment</a> of its endowment fund from fossil fuels in 2019, when they also officially declared a <a href="#">climate emergency</a>. <a href="#">The commitment</a> stated: "UBC is committed to eliminating all portfolio exposure in its Main Endowment Pool to companies that extract or process fossil fuels by 2030." UBC also has extensive policy in place establishing their intent to divest from fossil fuels, and as of April 2025, only 0.8 per cent of UBC's Endowment Fund remained invested in fossil fuel companies. UBC is on the path towards, but has not yet fully achieved full divestment from fossil fuels. Information on UBC investment management can be found in the <a href="#">UBC IM reports</a>.</p> <p><i>Recommendations:</i>            Uphold the commitment to full divestment by 2030.</p>	

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Additionally, a key throughline of UBC's Campus Sustainability is the Campus as a Living Lab (CLL) initiative. Coordinated by the UBC Sustainability Hub, the CLL initiative provides a framework for UBC students, faculty, staff, and partners to tackle large-scale sustainability problems through making use of campus resources, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. In the words of the initiative itself: "Campus as a Living Lab" (CLL) integrates the operations, infrastructure and academic capacity of a university to advance research, learning and sustainability initiatives. CLLs leverage the unique resources of a university to address sustainability challenges through the exploration and application of innovations, using its campus as a vibrant and dynamic [learning laboratory](#)." The Living Lab creates a bridge between theoretical research and practical application for the advancement of climate solutions at UBC. It includes a wide range of activities, from large-scale capital projects, to supporting research and development for new technologies, to supporting innovative student learning experiences. Overall, it provides a framework and philosophy for the enablement of innovative sustainability solutions and projects.

# 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 of British Columbia School of Occupational Therapy.** The following table presents the individual section grades and overall institutional grade for the University of British Columbia School of Occupational Therapy on this Planetary Health Report Card.

Section	Raw Score %	Letter Grade
<b>Planetary Health Curriculum (30%)</b>	$(51/79) \times 100 = 64.6\%$	B-
<b>Interdisciplinary Research (17.5%)</b>	$(15/17) \times 100 = 88.2\%$	A
<b>Community Outreach and Advocacy (17.5%)</b>	$(13/14) \times 100 = 92.9\%$	A
<b>Support for Student-led Planetary Health Initiatives (17.5%)</b>	$(12/15) \times 100 = 80\%$	A-
<b>Campus Sustainability (17.5%)</b>	$(24/32) \times 100 = 75\%$	B+
<b>Institutional Grade</b>	$(64.6 \times 0.3 + 88.2 \times 0.175 + 92.9 \times 0.175 + 80 \times 0.175 + 75 \times 0.175) = 78.2\%$	<b>B+</b>

# Report Card Trends

## Section Overview

This graph demonstrates trends in overall and section grades for the years in which University of British Columbia Occupational Therapy has participated in the Planetary Health Report Card initiative.

### Planetary Health Report Card Trends for University of British Columbia

