Planetary Health Report Card (Medicine) 2026:

University of Connecticut

2025-2026 Contributing Team:

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Land acknowledgment: UConn SOM acknowledges its occupancy of the Tunxis, Nimpuc, Mohegan, Podunks, Sicaog, Pocumtuc, Paugaussett, and Wappinger lands.

Summary of Findings

Overall Grade	A

Curriculum	A-

- Overall, The University of Connecticut Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine (UConn Health) has steadily improved its planetary health curriculum and now has a fairly robust system in place for first and second year medical students. Though the session “Clinical Implications of Climate Change” carries most of the weight, planetary health and sustainability topics have been increasingly interwoven throughout the other required core courses as part of a formal Climate & Environmental Health curricular thread. Climate and planetary health topics are presented in a way that connects environmental health to human health in an effort to make medical students more invested in climate topics, which thus far appears to be successful. Students and faculty alike continue to actively work on methods of integrating more planetary health topics into the medical curriculum.
- **Recommendations:** The only area of curriculum where UConn Health did not receive any points is the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and value systems as essential components of planetary health solutions. One suggestion could be to discuss a topic like cultural burning as a method of maintaining ecological diversity and preventing wildfires. Such a topic could easily have a place in the “Clinical Implications of Climate Change” session for Health System Sciences. Another recommendation would be to increase the curricular integration of climate topics for third and fourth year medical students. Currently, it is largely first and second year students that benefit from UConn’s robust climate curriculum in the preclinical stage, so it is important to brainstorm ways of expanding the climate curriculum more into the clinical space.

Interdisciplinary Research	A+

- The University of Connecticut has improved its planetary health research as an institution, mostly through work done by the Department of Public Health, which is part of the School of Medicine. Compared to previous years, the UConn Health is more involved in national and international organizations for climate change and planetary health, and has hosted more informational sessions/symposiums for education, awareness, and dissemination of research findings.
- **Recommendations**: Currently, much of the work being done is within the Department of Public Health, which does have medical student involvement, however UConn could still improve the visibility of the work done by the Department of Public Health and the integration with the medical and dental school proper. One suggestion is to implement research series or grand rounds style lectures for the undergraduate students on a regular basis (ex. monthly).

Community Outreach and Advocacy	B+

- The University of Connecticut School of Medicine has continued commitment to community outreach and advocacy by connecting medical students to community members and offering climate-related continuing education sessions. A few hospitals affiliated with the institution have accessible materials for patients regarding environmental exposures and impacts of climate change on health.
- **Recommendations**: We recommend the University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC) create and publish patient education materials in a centralized online location. We also recommend more frequent and comprehensive sustainability news updates sent to the student body, as well as increasing the number of planetary health courses for postgraduate education.

Support for Student-Led Initiatives	A

- UConn supports student groups dedicated to planetary health. There is one medical school group (Sustainability at UConn Health) that works closely with a faculty mentor and allies within the medical school. This group also works together with the Sustainability Working Group at UConn Health, the affiliate health system, to help direct policy and change. In addition, UConn offers opportunities for students to participate in planetary health-related research. However, these opportunities must be explicitly sought out. UConn does offer the Environmental and Social Sustainability Small Grants program for students and has many initiatives at the undergraduate level.
- **Recommendations**: Considering the number of initiatives at the undergraduate level, we recommend that the medical school specifically increase its support for and visibility of sustainability initiatives and opportunities to engage in local community volunteer programs.

Campus Sustainability	**A**

- UConn SOM, and the institution as a whole, has improved efforts to be a sustainable campus. In conjunction with the wider university, sustainable building practices are utilized for new buildings and the majority of old buildings have been retrofitted to be more sustainable. The food service company has sustainability guidelines for food and beverages. Additionally, the medical school offers environmentally-friendly transportation options and applies sustainability criteria when making decisions about supply procurement. The most recent positive change includes the university's commitment to full divestment from fossil fuels, as well as 100% of electricity for UConn SOM buildings being sourced from renewable energy options.
- **Recommendations**: We recommend a designated staff member and/or committee in charge of medical school and/or hospital sustainability, which would be an important asset to improve campus/hospital guidelines for events hosted on-site. Though UConn Health overall has adequate transparency about procurement and sustainability guidelines, we recommend more transparency from the School of Medicine specifically, as well as incentives or requirements for event sustainability. Additionally, we call for a specific commitment by the University at large to reinvest divested funds towards upgrading UConn Health's/LAZ Parking's shuttle fleet to hybrid/fully electric options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and/or investigating cost-benefit outcomes to improving Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning efficiency campus-wide, particularly in older buildings.

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 civilisation and the state of the natural systems on which it depends." For example, topics such as climate change, declining biodiversity, shortages of arable land and freshwater, and pollution would all fall under the realm of planetary health. Both planetary health and traditional 'environmental health' examine the relationship between human health and the external environment, including extreme temperatures, chemicals, vector-borne diseases, etc. Planetary health explicitly concerns itself with the potential health harms associated with human-caused perturbations of natural systems. Therefore, the human health focus of planetary health makes the field well-adapted for the context of health professional education. Throughout this report card, we use the term planetary health to refer to this broad swath of topics, but resources do not need to explicitly include the term "planetary health" to satisfy the metric.

- **Sustainable Healthcare:** As defined by the Academy of Royal Colleges, sustainable healthcare involves ensuring the ability to provide good quality care for future generations by balancing the economic, environmental, and social constraints and demands within health care settings. A sustainable healthcare system maintains population health, reduces disease burden and minimises use of healthcare services.

- **Education for Sustainable Healthcare (ESH):** is defined as the process of equipping current and future health professionals with the knowledge, attitudes, skills and capacity to provide environmentally sustainable services through health professional education, thus working to decrease the enormous environmental impact of the healthcare industry. Planetary Health Education is an integral part of this education rather than an end in itself. This is because knowledge on Planetary Health is required to be able to fully understand the necessity of sustainable healthcare as well as being part of the broader knowledge needed to fully protect and promote health. In summary, ESH is covered by the three Priority Learning Outcomes of the Centre of Sustainable Healthcare below, and Planetary Health Education is embraced in the first learning objective and is a fundamental requirement to achieve learning outcomes 2 and 3:

    1. Describe how the environment and human health interact at different levels.
    2. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to improve the environmental sustainability of health systems.
    3. Discuss how the duty of a doctor to protect and promote health is shaped by the dependence of human health on the local and global environment.

- **Medical School/Department vs. Institution:** When "Medical school" is specified in the report card, this only refers to curriculum and resources offered by the School/department of Medicine and does not include offerings from other parts of the university (e.g. undergraduate departments (USA), other related departments (e.g. Public Health, Population Health departments). In contrast, when "institution" is specified in the report card, we are referring to the university more broadly including all of its campuses. Any resource reasonably accessible by medical students, no matter where in the institution the resource comes from or if it is

specifically targeted for medical students, can meet this metric.

- **Environmental history (Curriculum Section):** This is a series of questions students are taught to ask during medical encounters that elicits patients' exposures and environmental risk factors. Historically, this has included consideration of exposures like pesticides, asbestos, and lead, though in the modern era shaped by climate change, it can be expanded to include things like wildfire smoke exposure, air pollution and mould after flooding. Key components include place of residence over the lifecourse, occupational history, food and water sources (e.g. meat from industrial feeding operations, regular fishing in contaminated water, access to clean drinking water), and exposure to air pollution. Please be as specific as possible when providing evidence for this metric.

- **Elective:** The word "elective" refers to an optional course or lecture series that a student can opt to take part in but is not a requirement in the core curriculum. Generally, these elective courses take place in the preclinical curriculum but vary by school.

- **Core Curriculum:** This refers to the taught material that is delivered to the entire cohort of students in one year.

- **Clerkship / Outreach:** This is a term used in the USA to refer to placements that medical students go on e.g. Pediatrics, General medicine, Psychiatry. In the UK these are referred to as rotations, outreach or placements. This is a relatively short (approximately 4-8 weeks) period of study and patient-centred clinical experience that takes place as part of the undergraduate programme.

- **Clinical rotation:** This is a term used to refer to placements that students go on (e.g., ophthalmology, surgery, cardiology).

- **Physiotherapy vs Physical Therapy:** For the purposes of this report card these terms are considered interchangeable. However, physiotherapy will be used primarily.

- **Community organisations:** For most institutions, there are existing groups that are not directly affiliated with the university and exist as a product of what the community the institution exists in cares about or needs. These specific community organisations relevant to this report include those that are focused around some aspect of climate and health preservation. These community organisations can include but are not limited to local mutual aid initiatives, underserved-resource distribution groups, clean-up and nature conservation groups, community gardeners, and other environmental-related organisations. If your institution does not have access to local volunteerships with community groups, please report any community organisations your institution or school has collaborated with.

- **Climate justice:** The idea that certain population groups and geographical locations which are disproportionately more impacted by climate change are already economically and socially disadvantaged. This double vulnerability sits alongside pre-existing social justice concerns and should therefore shift policy and practice to mitigate the inequitable effects of the climate crisis.

- **Extractivism:** The removal of natural resources typically in large quantities. Within anthropology this term is often used in the context of colonialism to refer to the

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

- **Global South:** Nations that often have less economic and industrial development and are typically in the southern hemisphere. These nations have been found to be disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis.

- **Low socioeconomic status (SES):** An individual or geographical area that across a variety of socioeconomic factors (e.g., income, education, race/ethnicity) is considered vulnerable. This vulnerability has been correlated to more adverse health outcomes often as a consequence of encountering more barriers in accessing and receiving healthcare.

- **Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC):** Countries that have lower degrees of economic affluence.

- **Anthropogenic:** Created through human activity

- **Marginalized communities:** Groups excluded from mainstream economic, educational, social, and/or cultural experiences due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, and/or immigration status (Sevelius et al., 2020).

Scoring Matrix

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

Other considerations:

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

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

Planetary Health Curriculum

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

Curriculum: General

1.1. Did your medical school offer elective courses (student selected modules) to engage students in Education for Sustainable Healthcare or Planetary Health in the last year?	
Yes, the medical school has offered **more than one** elective whose primary focus is ESH/planetary health in the past year. (3 points)	
Yes, the medical school has offered **one** elective whose primary focus is ESH/planetary health in the past year. (2 points)	
The medical school does **not** have any electives whose primary focus is ESH/planetary health, but there are one or more electives that include a **lecture** on planetary health. (1 point)	
No, the medical school has **not** offered any electives on planetary health or electives that include ESH/planetary health topics in the past year. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
Score Explanation: The medical school has no specific electives during their first and second years related to Climate Change. The medical school's Department of Public Health offers several electives on planetary health, including one called Climate Change and another course called Environmental Public Health. Medical students who are also in the MPH program can take these courses, though they are not advertised well to the rest of the medical school.	

Curriculum: Health Effects of Climate Change

1.2. Does your medical school 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:
The first-year medical school curriculum at UConn contains a session in the required course Health Systems Science (HSS), titled “Clinical Implications of Climate Change” that discusses climate and heat. This topic is explored in-depth because it is discussed at length during the session and has several testable learning objectives. One example of a learning objective of the session reads “Describe several key expected health implications of a warming planet, such as heat related illness.” The session also discusses climate sensitive medical conditions and tests students on the clinical findings of heat exhaustion vs heat stroke. Medical students also presented such topics during the Department of Medicine Grand Rounds in January 2024.

Additionally, in the mandatory course Case Oriented Essentials (COrE), first-year medical students are taught about the link between rising temperatures and adolescent development through the learning objective “recognize the connection between rising global temperatures and emotional, academic, and interpersonal development for adolescents.” In the second year of COrE during the female and male reproduction sessions, students are asked to “describe the effects of heat in early pregnancy” and “describe the effects of heat on spermatogenesis.”

1.3. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the impacts of extreme weather events on individual health and/or on healthcare systems?

This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)

Score Assigned:	3

Score Explanation:
The required course Health Systems Science (HSS) contains a session titled “Clinical Implications of Climate Change” that discusses the increased incidence of extreme weather events due to climate change and the impacts on health. This topic is explored in-depth because it is discussed at length during the session and has several testable learning objectives. One example of a testable learning objective is “Apply basic climate science to anticipate impacts of climate change, rising temperatures, and extreme weather on social and environmental determinants of health, and assess own practice locale and beyond for climate vulnerabilities.”

Medical students also presented such topics during the Department of Medicine Grand Rounds in January 2024.

The HSS course has another session titled “Systems Thinking and Disaster” that is dedicated to educating first year students on the role of physicians in natural disasters and disaster preparedness.

1.4. Does your medical school curriculum address the impact of climate change on the changing patterns of infectious diseases?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score Explanation:
The required course Health Systems Science (HSS) contains a session titled "Clinical Implications of Climate Change" that discusses climate and infectious diseases. This topic is explored in-depth because it is discussed at length during the session and has several testable learning objectives, such as "describe several key expected health implications of a warming planet, such as [...] infectious disease." Specific examples of infectious diseases that are discussed during the session include legionella, vibrio vulnificus, and leptospirosis, demonstrating how cases increase with rising heat and more extreme storms.

In the required course Case-Oriented Essentials (COrE), second year medical students learn about vector-borne infectious diseases in detail, in which the impact of climate change is briefly discussed in the context of tick and mosquito-borne illnesses.

1.5. Does your medical school curriculum address the respiratory health effects of climate change and air pollution?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score Explanation:
The required course Health Systems Science (HSS) contains a session titled "Clinical Implications of Climate Change" that discusses the respiratory health effects of climate change and air pollution. This topic is explored in-depth because it is discussed at length during the session and has several testable learning objectives. One example of a testable learning objective is "describe several key expected health implications of a warming planet, such as [...] cardiopulmonary and other conditions."

Another part of the session discusses air pollution and respiratory health in the context of health co-benefits and patient counseling. One example used in the session is how physicians can counsel patients on the pollutants and health risks associated with having a natural gas stove in the home.

Another HSS session, titled “Environmental Health,” educates medical students on the effects of air pollution on local communities in CT. As part of the session, air quality monitors are brought into the auditorium by our public health partners for an exercise in fine particulate matter.

In Case Oriented Essentials (COrE), first-year medical students are taught about the inflammatory effects of air pollution/particulate matter on the body when learning about other inflammatory diseases and arthritis.

During COrE in the second year of preclinicals, students are asked to “describe the link between air pollution and chronic lung diseases, such as emphysema, and the contribution of heat on worsening lung illnesses.”

1.6. Does your medical school curriculum address the cardiovascular health effects of climate change, including increased heat?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score Explanation:
The required course Health Systems Science (HSS) contains a session titled “Clinical Implications of Climate Change” that addresses the cardiovascular health effects of climate change. This topic is explored in-depth because it is discussed at length during the session and has several testable learning objectives. One example of a testable learning objective is “describe several key expected health implications of a warming planet, such as heat related illness, [...] cardiopulmonary, renal, [...] and other conditions.”

Another part of the session discusses cardiovascular health and climate in the context of health co-benefits (changes that benefit both planetary and human health) and patient counseling. One example used in the session is how physicians can counsel patients on eating a plant-based diet as a way to improve cardiovascular and metabolic health, while also reducing their carbon footprint.

The topic of how to counsel a patient on the environmental and cardiovascular health co-benefits of a plant-based diet is also discussed in first-year preclinicals in the course Case Oriented Essentials (COrE). Similarly, in the course Delivery of Clinical Care (DoCC), first-year medical students are taught about the cardiovascular health benefits of a plant-based diet. COrE, DoCC, and HSS are all required courses taken by all medical students.

1.7. Does your medical school curriculum address the mental health and neuropsychological effects of environmental degradation and climate change?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score Explanation:
The required course Health Systems Science (HSS) contains a session titled "Clinical Implications of Climate Change" that addresses the mental health and neuropsychological effects of environmental degradation and climate change. This topic is discussed at length and includes a testable learning objective that asks students to "describe several key expected health implications of a warming planet, such as heat related illness, [...] neurological, mental health, [...] and other conditions." The session specifically discusses the increased incidence of depression, anxiety, aggression, domestic violence, PTSD and other psychiatric emergencies with rising temperatures, pollution, and natural disasters. Students are also asked to define concepts of intergenerational justice and solastalgia in the context of environmental degradation. They also learn about psychiatric medications and neurological conditions like MS that make patients more susceptible to climate change impacts, especially increased temperatures.

In Case Oriented Essentials (COrE), first-year medical students are taught about the link between rising temperatures and adolescent development/mental health through the learning objective "recognize the connection between rising global temperatures and emotional, academic, and interpersonal development for adolescents."

1.8. Does your medical school curriculum address the relationships between health, individual patient food and water security, ecosystem health, and climate change?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score Explanation:
The required course Health Systems Science (HSS) contains a session titled "Clinical Implications of Climate Change" that briefly covers water and food insecurity, and the resulting effects on different populations and ecosystems around the world. Learning objectives of the session ask students to "apply basic climate science to anticipate impacts of climate change [...] on social and environmental determinants of health" and to "describe several key expected health implications of a warming planet, such as malnutrition." Students specifically learn about the worsening droughts and animal extinctions in Somalia and Tunisia, and connect such climate effects to the increasing

prevalence of food and water scarcity, malnutrition, and ecosystem instability in those regions. Another HSS session called “Environmental Health” explores the effects of water pollution on health in local Connecticut communities. As part of the session, students hear about the health impacts on a patient whose town water supply was contaminated by solvent, and practice locating brownfields and the toxins within them.

1.9. Does your medical school curriculum address the outsized impact of climate change on marginalised populations such as those with low SES, women, communities of colour, Indigenous communities, children, homeless populations, and older adults?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score Explanation:
The required course Health Systems Science (HSS) contains a session titled “Clinical Implications of Climate Change” that addresses the disproportionate impact of climate change on marginalized populations. This topic is discussed at length and includes testable learning objectives that ask students to “apply basic climate science to anticipate impacts of climate change [...] on social and environmental determinants of health, and assess own practice locale and beyond for climate vulnerabilities,” and “identify and provide anticipatory guidance for vulnerable groups and individual patients with climate sensitive occupations and medical conditions.” The session also discusses the concept of climate refugees.

Another HSS session called “Environmental Health” explores the effects of air, soil, and water pollution on local Connecticut communities and asks students to identify the most vulnerable and burdened populations. The session emphasizes environmental racism and environmental justice issues related to pollution.

1.10. Does your medical school curriculum address the unequal regional health impacts of climate change globally?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2

Score Explanation:
The required course Health Systems Science (HSS) contains a session titled “Clinical Implications of Climate Change” that addresses the unequal regional health impacts of climate change globally.

The entire session is structured so that students explore the many effects of climate change on different areas around the world, including Tunisia, Somalia, Puerto Rico, the continental US, Bangladesh, and the Netherlands. The session also discusses the concept of climate refugees, forced migration, and displacement due to climate change.

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

1.11. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the reproductive health effects of industry-related environmental toxins (e.g. air pollution, pesticides, microplastics)?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
Score Explanation: The course, Health Systems Science (HSS), has a session titled "Environmental Health," which specifically discusses the perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) family of chemicals and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) that can have adverse effects on reproduction. In the course Case Oriented Essentials (COrE), second-year students learn about different teratogens, including environmental toxins.	

1.12. Does your <u>medical school</u> 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:	3
Score Explanation: *The Health Systems Science (HSS) session called "Environmental Health" discusses local contaminated bodies of water that impact human and fish populations. It also discusses Superfund (polluted areas in the United States designated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)) that require a long term response to clean up hazardous contaminants) and Brownfield (previously developed land that is not currently in use due to the potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant) sites in CT. An additional topic discussed in this session is the Hartford Trash Incinerator and the negative health impacts it has caused in the community. As part of the session, students hear first-hand accounts from the people in the community affected by such toxins.* Another HSS session called "Toward	

Health Equity in Clinical Practice" briefly discusses the lack of green spaces in surrounding communities.

1.13. To what extent does your <u>medical school</u> emphasise the importance of Indigenous knowledge and value systems as essential components of planetary health solutions?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
Score Explanation: At this time, Indigenous knowledge and value systems are not covered in any core or elective curriculum sessions.	

1.14. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the outsized impact of anthropogenic environmental toxins on marginalised populations such as those with low SES, women, communities of colour, children, homeless populations, Indigenous populations, and older adults?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
Score Explanation: The "Environmental Health" session for the required course Health Systems Science (HSS) emphasizes how environmental toxins disproportionately harm marginalized populations, specifically low SES, communities of color, and the homeless population. For example, there is a discussion on the Hartford Trash Incinerator and its placement within a marginalized community. As part of the session, students hear first-hand accounts from individuals representing marginalized groups who have been harmed by these toxins. A major theme of this required session is environmental racism and justice, making it a topic that is explored in-depth by the core curriculum.	

1.15. Does your medical school curriculum address the environmental and health co-benefits of a plant-based diet?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 point)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score Explanation:
Three of UConn's required core classes, Case Oriented Essentials (COrE), Health Systems Science (HSS), and Delivery of Clinical Care (DoCC), contain sessions focusing on a plant-based diet. These sessions highlight the environmental benefits and the health co-benefits of consuming a plant-based diet, and encourage students to think about how they would use those benefits to counsel patients on adopting a plant-based diet. The connection between plant-based diets and planetary health, along with individual health, is emphasized. Students are asked to demonstrate how they would counsel a patient on the co-benefits (changes that benefit both planetary and human health) of a plant-based diet. Because this topic is integrated throughout these various core classes and is associated with multiple learning objectives, this topic is explored in-depth in the core curriculum.

1.16. Does your medical school curriculum address the carbon footprint of healthcare systems?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score Explanation:
The required course Health Systems Science (HSS) contains a session titled "Clinical Implications of Climate Change" that addresses the carbon footprint of healthcare systems. There is an entire portion of the session dedicated to the waste and carbon footprint generated by the healthcare system, as well as methods we can take to make healthcare more sustainable, such as "greening" the OR. A specific learning objective of this session is that students are asked to "consider what role the healthcare community should have in conveying climate-related health concerns to the public, evidence for why health professionals are in a unique position to do so, and the urgency of promoting sustainable practices in health care delivery."

Another HSS session called "Environmental Health" briefly discusses the large generation of waste and waste disposal within UConn Health's surgical departments and ORs, as well as UConn Health as a whole.

1.17. Does your medical school curriculum cover these components of sustainable clinical practice in the core curriculum? (points for each)	**Score**
The health **and** environmental **co-benefits** of **avoiding** over-medicalisation, over-investigation and/or over-treatment (2 points)	2
The environmental impact of **pharmaceuticals** and over-prescribing as a cause of climate health harm. Alternatively teaching on **deprescribing** where possible and its environmental and health co-benefits would fulfil this metric. (2 points) .	0
The health **and** environmental **co-benefits** of **non-pharmaceutical management** of conditions where appropriate such as exercise or yoga classes for type 2 diabetes; social group activities such as gardening for mental health conditions; active transport such as bicycle schemes. This is commonly known as social prescribing in the UK. (1 point)	1
Environmental impact of **surgical** healthcare on planetary health and the climate crisis, and how can it be mitigated. (1 point)	1
The impact of **anaesthetic** gases on the healthcare carbon footprint and ways to reduce anaesthesia's environmental impacts, such as total intravenous anaesthesia or choosing less environmentally harmful anaesthetic gas options with reduced greenhouse gas emissions. (1 point)	1
The impact of **inhalers** on the healthcare carbon footprint and the environmental benefit of dry powdered inhalers over metered dose inhalers. (1 point)	0
Waste production within healthcare **clinics** and strategies for reducing waste in clinical activities (e.g. single use items in the inpatient or outpatient setting) (1 point)	1

Score Explanation:
The Health Systems Science (HSS) course dedicates an entire session to the Choosing Wisely campaign, emphasizing the importance of avoiding over-medicalization, over-investigation, and over-treatment.

Another HSS session called “Clinical Implications of Climate Change” discusses the carbon footprint of the U.S. healthcare industry and Health Care Without Harm, a global movement for environmentally responsible health care. It also briefly mentions the impact of anaesthetic gases on the atmosphere and UConn’s efforts to green the OR.. Additionally, it touches on counseling about health co-benefits of climate-friendly choices.

A third HSS session called “Environmental Health” briefly discusses the large generation of waste and waste disposal within UConn Health’s surgical departments and ORs, as well as UConn Health as a whole.

The Delivery of Clinical Care (DoCC) course has a session on nutrition and obesity, which also discusses co-benefits on non-pharmaceutical management of conditions like diabetes and obesity.

1.18. In training for patient encounters, does your <u>medical school's</u> curriculum introduce strategies to have conversations with patients about the health effects of climate change?	
Yes, there are strategies introduced for having conversations with patients about climate change in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
Yes, there are strategies introduced for having conversations with patients about climate change in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
No, there are **not** strategies introduced for having conversations with patients about climate change. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
Score Explanation: The HSS session "Clinical Implications of Climate Change" explores the role of the healthcare professionals in conveying climate-related health concerns to the public. Specific learning objectives read "Identify and provide anticipatory guidance for vulnerable groups and individual patients with climate sensitive occupations and medical conditions," and "Consider what role the healthcare community should have in conveying climate-related health concerns to the public, evidence for why health professionals are in a unique position to do so, and the urgency of promoting sustainable practices in health care delivery." As part of the session, students are asked to demonstrate how they would talk to a patient about a climate change topic of their choice. In the required courses Case Oriented Essentials (COrE) and Delivery of Clinical Care (DoCC), first-year medical students practice counseling patients on the health co-benefits of a plant-based diet. Later in the first year of DoCC, students learn how to take an environmental history.	

1.19. In training for patient encounters, does your <u>medical school's</u> curriculum introduce strategies for taking an environmental history or exposure history?	
Yes, the **core** curriculum includes strategies for taking an environmental history. (2 points)	
Only **elective** coursework includes strategies for taking an environmental history. (1 point)	
No, the curriculum does **not** include strategies for taking an environmental history. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
Score Explanation: As part of their Delivery of Clinical Care (DoCC) Course, students are taught in their orientation, and into Block A, to take an environmental history. During their second year in DoCC E block they discuss counseling a patient on methane exposure, and are educated on the effects and presentation of radon exposure.	

1.20. Is your medical school currently in the process of implementing or improving Education for Sustainable Healthcare (ESH)/planetary health education?	
Yes, the medical school is currently in the process of making **major** improvements to ESH/planetary health education. (4 points)	
Yes, the medical school is currently in the process of making **minor** improvements to ESH/planetary health education. (2 points)	
No, there are **no** improvements to planetary health education in progress. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	4
Score Explanation: At UConn, there are efforts to expand climate health education within the general curriculum. Though many of these efforts are student-driven, there is administrative support from physicians and professors. The Department of Medicine at UConn Health has welcomed educational efforts with a Grand Rounds session on climate change. Students have successfully incorporated more discussion of climate change and sustainability into the core curriculum through the main core courses, and continue to work on this endeavor. UConn also has a Sustainability Working Group that meets every 3 months, in which faculty, staff, and students come together to discuss how to make the institution more sustainable.	

1.21. 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 medical school curriculum. (6 points)	
Some planetary health/ESH topics are appropriately integrated into the core medical student curriculum. (4 points)	
Planetary health/ESH is not integrated and is primarily addressed in **(a) standalone lecture(s).** (2 points)	
There is **minimal/no** education for sustainable healthcare. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	4
Score Explanation: Through a formal Climate & Environmental Health thread, ESH and Planetary Health topics are integrated throughout the first two years of medical school with sessions in the major core courses: Case Oriented Essentials (COrE), Health Systems Science (HSS), and Delivery of Clinical Care (DoCC). Years three and four of the medical school curriculum currently do not have class-wide ESH or Planetary Health education. However, individual students have taken on educational projects about climate & health in the clinical setting, such as a presentation on the climate impacts on psychiatric health during the psychiatry clerkship. There is also a medical grand rounds presentation on the clinical implications of climate change delivered to UConn attendings, residents, and medical students on internal medicine clerkships annually.	

1.22. Does your medical school employ a member of faculty to specifically oversee and take responsibility for the incorporation of planetary health and sustainable healthcare as a theme throughout the course?	
Yes, the **medical school** has a specific faculty/staff member responsible for overseeing curricular integration of planetary health and sustainable healthcare. (1 point)	
No, the **medical school** does **not** have a specific faculty/staff member responsible for overseeing curricular integration of planetary health and sustainable healthcare. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
Score Explanation: Yes, there is a specific faculty member that has been appointed the faculty director of the Climate & Environmental Health curricular thread a few years ago. They are responsible for identifying areas in the core curriculum where climate education could be strengthened and for interweaving environmental health topics throughout the various core classes and years.	

1.23. Does your health professional curriculum include teaching on civic engagement/advocacy to address the environmental and structural determinants of health?	
This topic was explored **in depth** by the **core** curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was **briefly** covered in the **core** curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in **elective** coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was **not** covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
Score Explanation: While there is curriculum built into Health Systems Science (HSS) discussing ways in which medical students (and physicians) can get involved in legislative advocacy there is nothing specific to climate advocacy. The HSS curriculum does include a session with a local state senator where students go through the process of drafting legislation and petition a mock group of state legislators. The students in the class do have the choice to pursue climate related legislation, but there is not a climate specific advocacy session built into the curriculum.	

Section Total (63 out of 75)	**84%**

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Interdisciplinary Research

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

2.1. Are there researchers engaged in planetary health research and healthcare sustainability research at your institution?	
Yes, there are faculty members at the **institution** who have a **primary** research focus in planetary health **or** sustainable healthcare/vetcare. (3 points)	
Yes, there are individual faculty members at the **institution** who are conducting research **related** to planetary health or healthcare sustainability, OR are part of a national/international sustainability working group, but it is not their primary research focus. (2 points)	
There are sustainability researchers at the **institution**, but not specifically associated with healthcare/vetcare. (1 point)	
No, there are **no** planetary health and/or sustainability researchers at the **institution** at this time. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
Score Explanation: The Department of Public Health Sciences, housed within the School of Medicine, includes several faculty members whose research aligns with planetary health. For instance, Dr. Zamora and Dr. Brugge both focus on air quality and pollution. Additionally, UConn as an institution supports planetary health through numerous undergraduate departments and the Connecticut Institute for Resilience & Climate Adaptation (CIRCA), which promotes interdisciplinary collaboration to address climate change.	

2.2. Is there a dedicated department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research at your institution?
There is **at least one** dedicated department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research. (3 points)
There is **not currently** a department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research, but there are **plans** to open one in the next 3 years. (2 points)
There is an **Occupational and Environmental Health department**, but no interdisciplinary department or institute for planetary health research. (1 point)

There is **no** dedicated department or institute. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
Score Explanation: The University of Connecticut is home to the Institute of the Environment and Energy (IoEE), which is dedicated to addressing environmental challenges related to climate change, sustainability, food security, pollution, and species extinction through an interdisciplinary approach. Established in 2019, the IoEE now includes more than 170 faculty members and has expanded from four to five core administrative units. Its research highlights include work on energy grid resilience, biodiversity, climate change, sustainability, environmental policy, and energy systems. *In addition, UConn houses the Connecticut Institute for Resilience & Climate Adaptation (CIRCA), a multidisciplinary center of excellence that brings together experts in the natural sciences, engineering, economics, political science, finance, and law to develop practical solutions to challenges arising from a changing climate.*	

2.3. Is there a process by which communities disproportionately impacted by climate change and environmental injustice give input or make decisions about the research agenda at your institution?	
Yes, there is a process in which community members impacted by climate and environmental injustice have **decision-making power** in the climate + environmental research agenda. (3 points)	
Yes, there is a process in which community members impacted by climate and environmental injustice **advise** the climate + environmental research agenda. (2 points)	
No, but there are **current efforts** to establish a process for community members to advise or make decisions on the research agenda. (1 point)	
There is **no** process, and **no** efforts to create such a process. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
Score Explanation: The Connecticut Institute for Resilience & Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) advances scientific understanding of climate change and its impacts on coastal and inland floodplain communities while applying interdisciplinary best practices to strengthen climate resilience. CIRCA emphasizes building climate-literate, resilient communities to reduce loss of life, property, ecosystems, and social disruption from climate-related hazards, and collaborates closely with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP). In 2025, CIRCA published new peer-reviewed research on climate change vulnerability indices and methods for visualizing overburdened communities. A core initiative within this mission is CIRCA's Resilient Connecticut program, which partners directly with municipalities to develop concept designs, benefit–cost analyses, and implementation plans for resilience projects known as Phase III projects. Participating municipalities include several environmental justice communities such as Fair Haven, Jewett City, downtown Danbury, and Norwich. Each project is guided by a Citizen and Technical Advisory Committee (CTAC) made up of municipal staff and community representatives, and includes public meetings to gather broader community input.	

CIRCA also administers the Climate & Equity Grant Program, funded by CTDEEP, which supports community-based organizations in environmental justice communities by building capacity to mitigate, plan for, and respond to climate change. The program is designed to minimize administrative barriers and incorporates applicant feedback to improve accessibility. Additionally, CIRCA's Connecticut Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (CT EJScreen 2.0) demonstrates its commitment to community-engaged research by incorporating input from advisory committees and multilingual community feedback sessions to ensure that communities most affected by environmental and climate injustices help shape research and policy-relevant tools.

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:	3

Score Explanation:
The University of Connecticut's Office of Sustainability website serves as a central hub for the university's sustainability initiatives, highlighting UConn's progress, ongoing research, and available funding opportunities. It notes UConn's ranking as the 8th most sustainable university in the world and features current research related to climate change and sustainability. The Office of Sustainability and its student team also collect and submit institutional sustainability data for national rankings and accreditations, including the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (AASHE STARS), Tree Campus USA, and Bee Campus USA, while leading year-round student engagement initiatives such as RecycleThon and Haunted HEEP, a free 1-mile long spooky walk through the UConn's Hillside Environmental Education Park (HEEP). In addition, the website provides information on experiential learning opportunities, operational performance metrics, upcoming events, and key contacts.

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

Yes, the **institution** has hosted at least one conference or symposium on topics related to planetary health in the past year. (4 points)

Yes, the **institution** has hosted at least one conference or symposium on topics related to sustainable healthcare/vetcare in the past year. (3 points)

Yes, the **institution** has hosted a conference on topics related to planetary health / sustainable healthcare/vetcare in the past three years. (2 points)
The **institution** has not hosted any conferences directly, but they have provided financial support for a local planetary health event. (1 point)
No, the **institution** has not hosted a conference on topics related to planetary health in the past three years. (0 points)

Score Assigned:	4

Score Explanation:
UConn Law's Earth Day Conference in April 2025 ("A Planet Worth Fighting For") brought together experts to discuss environmental policy and climate science, topics that overlap significantly with planetary health concerns.

The One Health Conference at UConn convenes faculty and staff from across disciplines to explore equity from global to local perspectives, the human–animal–environment interface, and changing ecosystems through a One Health framework. The conference was held on Friday, November 14, 2025.

Medical students can apply for funding to go to the Conference of the Parties (COP). In addition, the medical school hosted a global health symposium for social and environmental determinants of health on April 3rd, 2024. All speakers discussed climate change and the keynote speaker spoke about climate justice in Hartford. A flyer can be found here: https://www.instagram.com/p/C5GnMkqu4Yh/

2.6. Is your institution a member of a national or international planetary health or ESH/ESV organisation?
Yes, the institution is a member of a national or international planetary health **or** ESH/ESV organisation. (1 point)
No, the institution is **not** a member of such an organisation. (0 points)

Score Assigned:	1

Score Explanation:
The University of Connecticut is part of the United States Health Promoting Campuses Network which falls under the larger International Health Promoting Universities and Colleges Network. In April 2024, they adopted the Okanagan Charter and in doing so are now part of a national planetary health program along with 32 other U.S. institutions.

Section Total (17 out of 17)	**100%**

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Community Outreach and Advocacy

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

3.1. Does your institution partner with community organisations to promote planetary and health?	
Yes, the **institution** meaningfully partners with **multiple** community organisations to promote planetary and environmental health. (3 points)	
Yes, the **institution** meaningfully partners with **one** community organisation to promote planetary and environmental health. (2 points)	
The **institution** does not partner with community organisations, but participates in community focused events relating to planetary health. (1 point)	
No, there is **no** such meaningful community partnership. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
Score Explanation: The University of Connecticut School of Medicine partners with a variety of community organizations to educate students and promote planetary health and practices. For example, the class Health Systems Science (HSS) teams up with the North United Methodist Church to educate students about the North Hartford Promise Zone, and how environmental detriment and gentrification affect the community. UConn also teams up with South Park and the Southside Institute Neighborhood Alliance to conduct trash and debris clean-ups in Hartford. In addition, faculty of UConn Health are involved with Connecticut Health Professionals for Climate Action (CHPCA), an organization for health professionals to push for policies that reduce carbon emissions.	

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 University of Connecticut School of Medicine runs an annual UConn Medical Student Health Equity Symposium for community members and medical students in the North Hartford Promise Zone in Hartford, CT. The symposium is community-facing and explores the social determinants of health related to the environment and health. More information can be found here: https://today.uconn.edu/2024/02/community-informed-learning-experience-for-uconn-med-students

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:
UConn Health's course Health Systems Science (HSS) educates students regarding sustainable healthcare and how environmental hazards affect population health.

The Sustainability at UConn Health interest group regularly sends emails regarding important planetary health events such as Earth Day.

The UConn Daily Digest often includes articles, research, and grants regarding environmental/planetary health. However, they are included in a way where they may get drowned out by the plethora of other information this Daily Digest provides. UConn Today also covers sustainability updates when provided.

3.4. Does the institution or main affiliated hospital trust engage in professional education activities targeting individuals post-graduation with the aim of ensuring their knowledge and skills in planetary health and sustainable healthcare remain up to date during their professional career?	
Yes, the **institution** or **main affiliated hospital trust** offers multiple in-person or online courses relating to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare for post-graduate providers, including at least one with a primary focus of planetary health. (2 points)	
Yes, the **institution** or **main affiliated hospital trust** offers one course relating to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare for post-graduate providers. (1 point)	
There are **no** such accessible courses for post-graduate providers. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
Score Explanation: A medical grand rounds session titled "Burning Fossil Fuels, Climate Change, and Health: What the Clinician Needs to Know" was held for post-graduate medical providers at UConn Health. Learning objectives of this session included describing exposures related to fossil fuels and climate change that increase health risk and describing the practical actions that clinicians can take to prevent or decrease effects of air pollution and climate change for patients. Another medical grand rounds session titled "Geo-spatial determinants of health" discussed how neighborhood context, including climate and environmental factors, matter in the setting of health and health disparities. Providers answered questions following each session to earn CME credit.	

3.5. Does your institution or its affiliated teaching hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients about environmental health exposures?	
Yes, the **institution** or **all affiliated hospitals** have accessible educational materials for patients. (2 points)	
Some affiliated hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients. (1 point)	
No affiliated medical centres have accessible educational materials for patients. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
Score Explanation: Hartford Hospital's website contains a Health Library with information on various topics, easily accessible to patients. One category in the Health Library is Environmental Health which offers information on causes and symptoms of many toxin-related illnesses, including cigarette-containing chemicals, asbestos, wood-burning stoves, pesticides and other pollutants in water, lead, radon, and carbon monoxide. Although UConn Health does have a website for patient services for occupational and environmental health, there is no part of this website that offers educational materials for patients. We recommend adding such a section to this website to provide easily accessible environmental educational materials to patients.	

3.6. Does your institution or its affiliated teaching hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients about the health impacts of climate change?	
Yes, the **institution** or **all affiliated hospitals** have accessible educational materials for patients. (2 points)	
Some affiliated hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients. (1 point)	
No affiliated hospitals have accessible educational materials for patients. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
Score explanation: The health news hub on Hartford Hospital's website contains a post titled, "Warm Winter Brings Spring Woes" explaining the harmful impacts of rising global temperatures on infectious disease spread and allergy severity. On their website, The Hospital of Central Connecticut does have information for patients regarding heat-related illnesses, though this resource does not explicitly mention higher global temperatures due to climate change. We recommend more patient education materials regarding the health impacts of climate change.	

Section Total (11 out of 14)	**79%**

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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 institution offer support for students interested in enacting a sustainability initiative/QI project?	
Yes, the **institution** *either* offers grants for students to enact sustainability initiatives/QI projects *or* sustainability QI projects are part of the core curriculum. (2 points)	
The **institution** encourages sustainability QI projects (to fulfil clerkship or longitudinal requirements) and offers resources to help students succeed in these projects, **but** there is no student funding available and there is no requirement to participate. (1 point)	
No, the institution does not offer opportunities or support for sustainability initiatives or QI projects. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
Score Explanation: Medical students can apply for a summer research project grant, which could be toward a sustainability QI should the student choose, but there are no sustainability initiative grants or funds for medical students specifically. The larger institution of UConn does have an Environmental and Social Sustainability Small Grants program for those who want to design sustainability initiatives/QI projects that medical students qualify to receive. The President's Research Investment in Sustainability Measures, Actions, Technologies, Initiatives, and Communities (PRISMATIC) Grants are only available for UConn undergraduate students.	

4.2. Does your institution offer opportunities for students to do research related to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare/vetcare?
The **institution** has a **specific** research program or fellowship for students interested in doing planetary health/sustainable healthcare/vetcare research. (2 points)
There are research opportunities for students to perform research related to planetary health/sustainable healthcare, but these **require student initiative** to seek them out and carry them out in their spare time. (1 point)
There are **no opportunities** for students to engage in planetary health/sustainable healthcare research. (0 points)

Score Assigned:	1

Score Explanation:
The UConn School of Medicine provides research opportunities to students throughout each of their four years, particularly during the summer between their first and second years. Students can choose to perform research related to planetary health/sustainability only if they seek out the opportunities themselves. There is no health track or scholars program specifically for environmental health related research from the institution.

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 larger institution of UConn has a webpage devoted to sustainability. On this page, students can find information pertaining to school initiatives, ways to become involved, who to contact, and grant information. UConn Health has a webpage for the Department of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, where students may find information about ongoing and published research projects, as well as contact information for faculty and research staff. While not all of the projects are related to sustainable healthcare, some seek to further the development of sustainable intervention programs. The School of Medicine does not have a page dedicated to planetary health. However, there is a web page that provides information about the medical and dental student group that is focused on planetary health, Sustainability at UConn Health.

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

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

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

No, there is **not** a student organisation at my institution dedicated to planetary health or sustainability in healthcare. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
Score Explanation: Sustainability at UConn Health is an interdisciplinary student group at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine aimed at improving sustainable initiatives and knowledge within the University of Connecticut's health center. The group is student-led with a faculty mentor Dr. Kirsten Ek.	

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 who serves on a department or institutional decision-making council/committee. (1 point)	
No, there is no such student representative. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
Score Explanation: There is a Sustainability Working Group that meets every 3 months, and the members of UConn Health's student-led interest group Sustainability at UConn Health, are invited to attend these meetings. The working group is composed of UConn administrators, physicians, nurses, facilities staff, tech staff , students, etc. On the institutional level, there is a UConn Health student representative for the new UConn Sustainability Policy, Energy & Environment Advisory Committee (SPEEAC) that meets bi-annually. This committee serves to recommend and advise on goals, metrics, and key performance indicators, and to review progress toward implementation in relation to university sustainability plans and initiatives.	

4.6. In the past year, has the institution had one or more co-curricular planetary health programs or initiatives in the following categories? (1 point each)	**Score**
Projects where students are able to gain experience in organic agriculture and sustainable food systems, such as gardens, farms, community supported agriculture (CSA), fishery programs, or urban agriculture projects.	1
Panels, speaker series, or similar events related to planetary health that have students as an intended audience.	1
Events in which students learn directly from members of a local environmental justice community about the climate and environmental challenges they face, and how health professionals can partner with their community to address these exposures and impacts.	1
Cultural arts events, installations or performances related to planetary health that have students as an intended audience.	1

Local volunteer opportunities related to building community resilience to anthropogenic environmental impacts.	1
Wilderness or outdoors programs (e.g., that organise hiking, backpacking, kayaking, or other outings for students)	1

Score Explanation:
At the UConn Storrs campus there is the Spring Valley Student Farm where students learn about sustainable community living, organic food growing methods, and the business aspects of how food is harvested, processed, and presented to the UConn dining community. UConn Storrs also hosts various events, panels, and summits geared towards students. For example, each year the Green Careers Panel provides students with the opportunity to network with sustainability professionals and hear their perspectives from the field.

Additionally, the annual Earth Day Spring Fling festival for students includes local, organic foods and hand-crafted goods as well as fun events like goat yoga. While many of these events are largely inaccessible to medical students, some speaker series are offered in a hybrid format allowing students to virtually attend discussions on topics such as the importance of sustainability and human rights in infrastructure selection. However, UConn does provide ample opportunities for engaging in local community volunteer programs that are accessible to undergraduates and medical students. Some of these include the Meskwaka Tree Project for urban and community forestry volunteers, Save the Sound for water quality monitoring training, among others.

In 2025, medical students had the opportunity to attend and/or volunteer at the nearby CHPCA Climate & Health Conference where they could hear from healthcare professionals and public health leaders about the impacts of climate change on local communities, how it will affect healthcare, and ongoing sustainability efforts in Connecticut.

In addition, The UConn School of Medicine's South Park Community Outreach organization partnered with the Kenny Park Sustainability Project to host local wellness pop-up events. These student-led events provided opportunities for medical students to interact with community members and provide them with educational information on health, wellness, and environmental sustainability. Both the Wellness Committee and the Wilderness Medicine Interest Group at UConn School of Medicine hosts various outdoor programs for the students throughout the year.

Section Total (13 out of 15)	**87%**

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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 institution have an Office of Sustainability?	
Yes, there is an Office of Sustainability with multiple full-time staff dedicated to campus sustainability. If the Office of Sustainability serves the entire campus, there is **at least one designated staff member** for sustainability at the hospital. (3 points)	
There is an Office of Sustainability with one or more full-time staff dedicated to campus sustainability, but **no specific staff member** in charge of hospital sustainability. (2 points)	
There are **no salaried sustainability staff,** but there is a sustainability task force or committee. (1 point)	
There are **no** staff members **or** task force responsible for overseeing campus sustainability. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
Score Explanation: While the University of Connecticut has an Office of Sustainability, the School of Medicine and UConn Health does not have a designated staff member dedicated to sustainability. However, UConn Health does have an official sustainability working group that meets every 3 months, composed of UConn administrators, physicians, nurses, facilities staff, information systems staff, and students.	

5.2. How ambitious is your institution's plan to reduce its own carbon footprint?	
The institution has a **written and approved plan** to achieve carbon neutrality by **2030** (5 points)	
The institution has a **written and approved plan** to achieve carbon neutrality by **2040** (3 points)	
The institution has a stated goal of carbon neutrality by **2040** but has **not created a plan** to reach that goal or the **plan is inadequate** (1 point)	
The institution does **not** meet any of the requirements listed above (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	5

Score Explanation: Connecticut's state government has undertaken several initiatives in efforts to achieve a zero-carbon electric supply of select publicly funded agencies, institutions, and/or organizations by 2040. The University of Connecticut committed to carbon neutrality by 2030, the latest initiative of which has been implemented at UConn Health in efforts to minimize HVAC costs and footprint was in one of its outpatient facilities, as seen here. While the undergraduate institutional 2024 Sustainability Action Plan does not explicitly mention UConn Health or the medical school, the sustainability working group and its facilities membership partner closely with other departments to continue to reduce emissions and the campus' carbon footprint.

5.3. Do buildings/infrastructure used by the institution for teaching (not including the hospital) utilize renewable energy?	
Yes, institution buildings are **100%** powered by renewable energy. (3 points)	
Institution buildings source **>80%** of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (2 points)	
Institution buildings source **>20%** of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (1 point)	
Institution buildings source **<20%** of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
Score Explanation: According to current facilities administration, UConn Health purchases its energy under a contract that stipulates it is 100% sourced from renewable options such as wind turbines, however the exact source mix is not readily available. That being said, since purchasing electricity from the new contract, energy usage has increased while emissions have decreased due to cleaner-produced electricity.	

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:
The University of Connecticut uses efficiency guidelines with designing and retrofitting existing buildings. There are incentives from the government that UConn has taken advantage of to reduce their energy consumption by using highly efficient systems. Newer buildings such as the Outpatient Pavilion follow LEED principles and ratings, and older buildings undergo energy retro-commission review on a cycle basis. Efforts have been made to install timed sensor LED for all outdoor lighting, to replace existing steam traps to more efficiently convert excess heating steam into hot water, and to optimize HVAC systems across campus. LEED guidelines have been followed for any newly constructed buildings in the last 10-15 years on the UConn Health campus.

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 UConn School of Medicine currently has a shuttle that picks up medical students close to common student dwellings. This shuttle also transports students, patients, and employees around the UConn Health campuses (e.g., parking lots, buildings). The sustainability working group is seeking options to make these shuttles more environmentally-friendly by decreasing emissions, exploring contracts to procure soft hybrid (automatic engine shut-off during idling periods) or EV shuttles. Route schedules are also managed to limit waste across the system. Additionally, outdated electronic parking access gates are being replaced with upgraded technology, signage stating “no idling” has been posted around the campus, and several solar-powered pedestrian signs and traffic lights have been installed across the campus to minimize the carbon footprint attributable to commuting. Additional EV chargers have been installed in parking garages as well.

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: UConn Health partners with Blue Earth, a local composting facility that is supporting an organics recycling program for both kitchen staff and consumer food waste. There are currently bins that are marked to collect conventional recycling located in the medical school classrooms, some hallways, and near the dining area. The bins in the classrooms look very similar to the trash bins, though some do use signage regarding what is appropriate to recycle in efforts to reduce general waste contamination. UConn Health is looking into working with iRecycle to recycle a lot of the plastics that are not currently being recycled (e.g., plastic tubs for sanitation wipes).	

5.7. Does the institution apply sustainability criteria when making decisions about the campus food and beverage selections (e.g. local sourcing, reduced meat, decreased plastic packaging)?	
Yes, the institution has a**dequate s**ustainability requirements for food and beverages, including meat-free days or no red-meat, and **is engaged** in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (3 points)	
There are sustainability guidelines for food and beverages, but they are **insufficient or optional**. The institution **is engaged** in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (2 points)	
There are sustainability guidelines for food and beverages, but they are **insufficient or optional.** The institution is **not** engaged in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (1 point)	
There are **no** sustainability guidelines for food and beverages. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
Score Explanation: The Health Center at the University of Connecticut changed its food service company effective January 1, 2022, to Morrison Healthcare. At this time there are no designated meat-free days or no red-meat days. However, there are non-meat options available. As a larger institution, UConn focuses most of its sustainable dining efforts towards the undergraduate campus.	

5.8. Does the institution apply sustainability criteria when making decisions about supply procurement?	
Yes, the institution has **adequate** sustainability requirements for supply procurement **and** is **engaged** in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (3 points)	
There are sustainability guidelines for supply procurement, but they are **insufficient or optional.** The institution is **engaged** in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (2 points)	
There are sustainability guidelines for supply procurement, but they are **insufficient or optional.** The institution is **not engaged** in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (1 point)	
There are **no** sustainability guidelines for supply procurement. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3

Score Explanation:
When appropriate, UConn Health does apply sustainability criteria when making decisions about supply procurement. Examples include disposable versus in-house sterilization on surgical and medical supplies, environmentally friendly pharmaceuticals (e.g., adapters directly attaching medication vial to IV solution bag), and anesthetics (e.g., anesthesia machines that have piston-driven ventilators that allow minimum gas flows).

The University of Connecticut as an institution has published purchasing and procurement guidelines that can be found here: https://sustainability.uconn.edu/operations/purchasing/ and here: https://policy.uconn.edu/2013/02/12/vendor-code-of-conduct//. In early 2013, the UConn Board of Trustees adopted a Vendor Code of Conduct which includes strong sections on environmental compliance and environmental sustainability including Principal Expectations regarding Environmental Compliance and Preferential Standards for environmentally sustainable products and services. However, it is not entirely clear whether the medical school specifically also abides by these regulations.

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:
UConn strongly recommends sustainability measures for events hosted at the institution and has published guidelines on how to achieve such measures, an example of which can be found here: https://sustainability.uconn.edu/2019/11/25/7-steps-to-planning-a-green-event/. However, it is not required nor entirely incentivized at the medical school or institutional level.

5.10. Does your institution have programs and initiatives to assist with making lab spaces more environmentally sustainable?	
Yes, the institution has **programs** and **initiatives** to assist with making lab spaces more environmentally sustainable. (2 points)	
There are **guidelines** on how to make lab spaces more environmentally sustainable, but not programs or initiatives. (1 point)	
There are **no** efforts at the institution to make lab spaces more sustainable. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
Score Explanation: Overall, UConn adopted the Sustainable Design and Construction Policy that mandates the university plan, design, construct, renovate, and maintain sustainable energy and water-efficiency buildings. By that standard, all new construction projects at UConn estimated at greater than $5 million must pursue at least a LEED Gold Rating. Most information regarding lab spaces is about the undergraduate campus, where the Science 1 Building is LEED Gold certified and a few other science/lab buildings are LEED Silver certified. It is unclear how this translates to the UConn Health Center (UCHC) and medical school specifically. That being said, from facilities energy sustainability team efforts, UConn Health has installed lab hood controls in all research labs to limit air flow during unoccupied periods.	

5.11. Does your institution's endowment portfolio investments include fossil-fuel companies?	
The institution is **entirely divested** from fossil fuels **and** has made a **commitment to reinvest divested funds** into renewable energy companies or renewable energy campus initiatives. (4 points)	
The institution is **entirely divested** from fossil fuels. (3 points)	
The institution has **partially divested** from fossil fuel companies **or** has made a **commitment to fully divest**, but **currently** still has fossil fuel investments. (2 points)	
The institution has **not divested** from fossil-fuel companies, but faculty and/or students are **conducting organised advocacy** for divestment. (1 point)	
Yes, the institution has investments with fossil-fuel companies and there have been **no efforts** to change that. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
Score Explanation: Per current UConn Health facilities management, the UConn Foundation has accomplished their 2025 goal of 0% investment in fossil fuels as of 2026, though publicly available endowment information shows 3.3% of funds invested in the energy sector without specific holdings described.	

Section Total (28 out of 32)	**88%**

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Grading

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

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

**Within each grade bracket, a score in the top 5% (_5 to_9%), receives a "+", and a score in the bottom 5% (_0-_4%) receives a "--". For example, a percentage score of 78% would be a B+.*

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

Section	Raw Score %	Letter Grade
Planetary Health Curriculum (30%)	(63/75) x 100 = 84%	A-
Interdisciplinary Research (17.5%)	(17/17) x 100 = 100%	A+
Community Outreach and Advocacy (17.5%)	(11/14) x 100 = 78%	B+
Support for Student-led Planetary Health Initiatives (17.5%)	(13/15) x 100= 86%	A
Campus Sustainability (17.5%)	(28/32) x 100 = 87%	A
Institutional Grade	**(Ax0.3 + Bx0.175 + Cx0.175 + Dx0.175 + Ex0.175) = 86%**	**A**

Report Card Trends

Section Overview
This graph demonstrates trends in overall and section grades for the years in which the University of Connecticut School of Medicine has participated in the Planetary Health Report Card initiative.