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# Planetary Health Report Card (Medicine) 2026: *University of Illinois - Chicago*

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**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE**

2025-2026 Contributing Team:

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## Land acknowledgment:

I recognize and acknowledge that the University of Illinois sits on the land of multiple native nations. I acknowledge and honor the original peoples of the Chicagoland area – the Three Fires Confederacy, Potawatomi, Odawa and Ojibwe Nations, as well as other Tribal Nations that know this area as their ancestral homeland, including the Menominee, Ho-Chunk, Miami, Peoria, and Sac and Fox.

These lands were the traditional birthright of indigenous peoples who were forcibly removed and who have faced two centuries of struggle for survival and identity in the wake of dispossession. Let us acknowledge the ground on which we stand so that all who come here know that we recognize our responsibilities to the peoples of that land and that we strive to address that history so that it guides our work in the present and the future.

I further acknowledge that this land is the current home to one of the largest urban Native American communities in the United States. Native people are part of Chicago's past, present, and future, and it is our responsibility to acknowledge these Nations and to work with them as we move forward as a more inclusive institution.

## Summary of Findings

<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>C+</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>D+</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The University of Illinois College of Medicine mainly offers education on planetary health through electives. While some topics on environmental justice are covered in the core curriculum, more can be done to integrate planetary health into the core curriculum to educate all students.</li> <li><b>Recommendations:</b> UICOM can integrate environmental health topics into certain existing lectures. For example, when highlighting the economic and health effects of overprescribing medications, the lecture can also describe the environmental impacts. There are multiple existing lectures in the core curriculum on pulmonary, cardiovascular, and reproductive health topics, in which addressing the impacts of climate change on heat and environmental exposures can also be easily integrated.</li> </ul>	
<b>Interdisciplinary Research</b>	<b>A-</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UIC has hosted conferences regarding sustainability and public health in the past year, in addition to housing a Center for Climate and Health Equity and a Center for Extreme Conditions and Health Excellence (CECHE). UIC also works in partnership with University of Chicago to form The Chicago Center for Health Environment (CACHET). Each of these allow interdisciplinary spaces that include the health sciences.</li> <li><b>Recommendations:</b> While UIC's current involvement allows for potential involvement from the medical school, offering more established opportunities and roles for medical students and residents may encourage greater interdisciplinary collaboration. Additionally, establishing an annual conference dedicated to planetary and health sciences could be beneficial, given UIC's involvement in the field.</li> </ul>	
<b>Community Outreach and Advocacy</b>	<b>C</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UIC has means through which they engage members of the community and community organisations, including supporting The Center for Extreme Conditions and Health Excellence and Anthropocene Consequences event. UIC also has a newsletter through which they actively update interested members on climate change and planetary health related events/happenings.</li> <li><b>Recommendations:</b> From the medical school and hospital standpoint, increased training in how to discuss the effects of climate change on health with patients would be greatly appreciated. This also includes investing more into development of brochures/handouts to serve as accessible educational materials for patients.</li> </ul>	
<b>Support for Student-Led Initiatives</b>	<b>A</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UIC provides various opportunities for students to become involved with, and even lead, environmental health and sustainability initiatives. Monetary support for projects is available through the institution's Sustainability Fund, research opportunities are available through projects with the school of public health and a newly inaugurated Center for Extreme Conditions and Health Excellence, and the Latino Cultural Center provides a variety of arts, volunteering, and knowledge-sharing events centering on gardening and sustainability.</li> <li><b>Recommendations:</b> The university should have a consolidated and dedicated website to highlight environmental opportunities, mentors, and funding. While the broader institution has a student sustainability representative, the College of Medicine should add a sustainability chair to the medical school class board within the Chicago Medical Student Council.</li> </ul>	

Campus Sustainability	C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UIC continues to make efforts to improve campus sustainability through many initiatives. Any new constructions must achieve LEED Gold certification, and UIC has also begun retrofitting older buildings. Programs to improve student sustainability are also underway, including testing solar-powered outdoor recycling bins on campus and offering a composting program in partnership with UIC Dining Services. UIC also continues its LabShare program, which reduces lab waste.</li><li>• <b>Recommendations:</b> Having a specific, strategic plan to reduce UIC’s carbon footprint will pave the way for creating specific goals for the campus to achieve carbon neutrality in the near future. Other areas for improvement include offering more sustainable food and beverage options, making procurement strategies sustainable, and divesting from fossil fuels.</li></ul>	

# 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

<b>1.1. Did your <u>medical school</u> offer elective courses (student selected modules) to engage students in Education for Sustainable Healthcare or Planetary Health in the last year?</b>	
Yes, the medical school has offered <b>more than one</b> elective whose primary focus is ESH/planetary health in the past year. (3 points)	
Yes, the medical school has offered <b>one</b> elective whose primary focus is ESH/planetary health in the past year. (2 points)	
The medical school does <b>not</b> have any electives whose primary focus is ESH/planetary health, but there are one or more electives that include a <b>lecture</b> on planetary health. (1 point)	
No, the medical school has <b>not</b> offered any electives on planetary health or electives that include ESH/planetary health topics in the past year. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation: The University of Illinois College of Medicine offers one student-selected elective lecture related to ESH/planetary health through the Medical Colloquia coursework, titled "Biodiversity, OneHealth and Nature-Based Solution." This lecture identifies the biodiversity hypothesis and some of the threats to biodiversity, explains how the loss of biodiversity adversely impacts human health, lists some health co-benefits of nature-based solutions, and identifies and encourages students to engage with the underrepresented area of biodiversity and health research. In addition, another Medical Colloquia lecture titled "Plants, People, and Culture: Lessons in Community-Engaged Research" was also offered. The lecture explained cultural, historical, and social dimensions of diet, plants, and health, drawing from collaborations with Black and Indigenous communities as well as how to integrate traditional plant-based practices with biomedical science, with a particular emphasis on addressing maternal health disparities.</i></p>	

## Curriculum: Health Effects of Climate Change

<b>1.2. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the relationship between extreme heat, health risks, and climate change?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	

This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<i>Score explanation: This topic is not currently covered in coursework or curriculum at the University of Illinois College of Medicine.</i>	

<b>1.3. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the impacts of extreme weather events on individual health and/or on healthcare systems?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<i>Score explanation: This topic is not currently covered in coursework or curriculum at the University of Illinois College of Medicine.</i>	

<b>1.4. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the impact of climate change on the changing patterns of infectious diseases?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<i>Score explanation: The University of Illinois College of Medicine offers one student-selected elective lecture related to ESH/planetary health through the Medical Colloquia coursework. "Biodiversity, OneHealth and Nature-Based Solution" explores the impact of biodiversity loss and climate change on human health, including its effects on infectious diseases.</i>	

<b>1.5. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the respiratory health effects of climate change and air pollution?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	

This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<i>Score explanation: This topic is not currently covered in coursework or curriculum at the University of Illinois College of Medicine.</i>	

<b>1.6. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the cardiovascular health effects of climate change, including increased heat?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<i>Score explanation: This topic is not currently covered in coursework or curriculum at the University of Illinois College of Medicine.</i>	

<b>1.7. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the mental health and neuropsychological effects of environmental degradation and climate change?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<i>Score explanation: The University of Illinois College of Medicine offers one student-selected elective lecture related to ESH/planetary health through the Medical Colloquia coursework. "Biodiversity, OneHealth and Nature-Based Solution" explores how climate change and biodiversity loss are intricately linked, both harming mental health.</i>	

<b>1.8. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the relationships between health, individual patient food and water security, ecosystem health, and climate change?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	

This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation: The University of Illinois College of Medicine offers one student-selected elective lecture related to ESH/planetary health through the Medical Colloquia coursework. "Biodiversity, OneHealth and Nature-Based Solution." explores how climate change and ecosystem health impact patients' food and water security as well as their health. Moreover, the MI core curriculum includes a lecture titled "Health Inequities in Cardiovascular Diseases and Contextualization of Care," which explores the connections between climate change in the form of deteriorating physical environment, food apartheid, and poor cardiovascular outcomes</i></p>	

<b>1.9. Does your <u>medical school</u> 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?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation: The University of Illinois College of Medicine offers two student-selected elective lectures related to ESH/planetary health through the Medical Colloquia coursework. "Biodiversity, OneHealth and Nature-Based Solution" and "Plants, People, and Culture: Lessons in Community-Engaged Research" that address the outsized impact of climate change on vulnerable populations, including women, communities of color, and Indigenous communities. In addition, two sessions in the core curriculum titled "Caring for Immigrant and Refugee Patients" and "Caring for the Patient Experiencing Housing Insecurity" also briefly address the issue of climate change's disproportionate impact.</i></p>	

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

*Score explanation: The University of Illinois College of Medicine offers one student-selected elective lecture related to ESH/planetary health through the Medical Colloquia coursework. “Biodiversity, OneHealth and Nature-Based Solution” addresses the unequal regional health impacts of climate change globally with a focus on biodiversity loss.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Score Assigned: 0

*Score explanation: This topic is not currently covered in coursework or curriculum at the University of Illinois College of Medicine.*

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

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

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

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

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

Score Assigned: 3

*Score explanation: At the University of Illinois-Chicago, human-caused environmental threats are addressed in the Health, Illness, and Society course through the core curriculum. A lecture titled “Population Health, Structural Competency and Health Equity and Measurements of Health and Disease” describes how redlining in Chicago has resulted in environmental inequity, contributing to Chicago’s significant health disparities. Another lecture, “Health Inequities in Cardiovascular Diseases and Contextualization of Care,” explores the disparities in cardiovascular morbidity, with mention of the high burden of air pollution and food apartheid on vulnerable populations in Chicago.*

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

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

This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score explanation: The University of Illinois College of Medicine offers student-selected elective lectures related to ESH/planetary health through the Medical Colloquia coursework “Plants, People, and Culture: Lessons in Community-Engaged Research” which emphasizes to students the importance of seeing patients not only as individuals with biomedical needs but also as members of communities with cultural traditions, foodways, and lived experiences that shape health. The lecture drew on Indigenous knowledge and value systems to integrate traditional plant-based practices with biomedical science. The lecture “Biodiversity, OneHealth and Nature-Based Solution” also discussed how indigenous stewarded areas have less biodiversity.</i></p>	

<b>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?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation: In the M1 core curriculum at UIC, the course Health, Illness, and Society includes a lecture titled “Health Inequities in Cardiovascular Diseases and Contextualization of Care.” The lecture discusses how toxic exposures, such as those stemming from poor housing and environmental conditions, disproportionately affect marginalized populations, leading to significantly higher rates of morbidity and mortality. It concludes with a call to action, urging advocacy and interventions for environmental justice to improve human health. The M1 curriculum also involves a Core Case titled, “Approach to Anemias” which includes the following learning objectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Review the importance of lead poisoning as a public health issue.</i></li> <li>● <i>Identify sources of lead in the environment and structural factors that impact populations who are at risk for elevated lead levels.</i></li> <li>● <i>Discuss structural factors that contribute to disparities in pediatric lead poisoning among socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups.</i></li> <li>● <i>Recognize the role of health care providers and the impact of public health measures in regard to childhood lead poisoning.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>In the M2 core curriculum, various lectures discussing patient care for children, homeless populations, immigrants and refugees, and older adults also mention the outsized impact of anthropogenic environmental toxins.</i></p>	

*Curriculum: Sustainability*

<b>1.15. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the environmental and health co-benefits of a plant-based diet?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 point)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation: In the M1 curriculum at UICOM, students receive 2 lectures entitled “Optimizing Lifestyle for the Prevention of Metabolic Syndrome” and “Food Insecurity” in their core curriculum. Both of these lectures emphasize the role of lifestyle interventions, such as plant-based diets, in promoting human health. Moreover, students may select multiple electives through the Medical Colloquia sessions that discuss the environmental and health co-benefits of a plant-based diet such as “Plants, People, and Culture: Lessons in Community-Engaged Research”, “What I Wish I Learned in Medical School about Nutrition,” and “Culinary Medicine”.</i></p>	

<b>1.16. Does your <u>medical school</u> curriculum address the carbon footprint of healthcare systems?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score explanation: The University of Illinois College of Medicine offers one student-selected elective lecture related to ESH/planetary health through the Medical Colloquia coursework, “Biodiversity, OneHealth and Nature-Based Solution”, which includes several slides addressing healthcare’s climate footprint.</i></p>	

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

The health <b>and</b> environmental <b>co-benefits</b> of <b>non-pharmaceutical management</b> of conditions where appropriate such as exercise or yoga classes for type 2 diabetes; social group activities such as gardening for mental health conditions; active transport such as bicycle schemes. This is commonly known as social prescribing in the UK. (1 point)	0
Environmental impact of <b>surgical</b> healthcare on planetary health and the climate crisis, and how can it be mitigated. (1 point)	0
The impact of <b>anaesthetic</b> 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)	0
The impact of <b>inhalers</b> on the healthcare carbon footprint and the environmental benefit of dry powdered inhalers over metered dose inhalers. (1 point)	0
<b>Waste production</b> within healthcare <b>clinics</b> and strategies for reducing waste in clinical activities (e.g. single use items in the inpatient or outpatient setting) (1 point)	0
<p><i>Score explanation:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At the University of Illinois College of Medicine, the curriculum covers the health and economic effects of over-medicalization and over-treatment, but does not cover the environmental effects.</li> <li>2. While the curriculum at UICOM emphasizes de-prescribing for patient health, it does not include the environmental impact of pharmaceuticals.</li> <li>3. The core curriculum at UICOM emphasizes the benefits of non-pharmaceutical management for patient health (eg. lecture titled: Healthcare disparities in CV diseases), but does not cover the environmental co-benefits of non-pharmaceutical management.</li> <li>4. The core curriculum at UICOM does not explore the environmental impact of surgical healthcare on planetary health.</li> <li>5. The environmental impact of anesthetic gases is not explored in the UICOM core curriculum.</li> <li>6. The curriculum at UICOM does not include the impact of inhalers on the healthcare carbon footprint.</li> <li>7. The curriculum at UICOM does not discuss waste production within healthcare clinics</li> </ol>	

**Curriculum: Clinical Applications**

<b>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?</b>	
Yes, there are strategies introduced for having conversations with patients about climate change in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
Yes, there are strategies introduced for having conversations with patients about climate change in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
No, there are <b>not</b> strategies introduced for having conversations with patients about climate change. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1

*Score explanation: At the University of Illinois - Chicago, the elective lecture “Biodiversity, OneHealth and Nature-Based Solution,” offers guidance for having conversations with patients who are in high-risk environments.*

**1.19. In training for patient encounters, does your medical school’s 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:

0

*Score explanation: This topic is not currently covered in coursework or curriculum at the University of Illinois College of Medicine.*

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

**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:

2

*Score explanation: The University of Illinois College of Medicine is working towards integrating planetary health education in the core curriculum of Block 4 (Cardiopulmonary) in the current and upcoming coming academic year, with there being one mandatory “Team-Based Learning” for M1s addressing the connection between planetary and human health scheduled for April 2026. Additional electives are also being organized by faculty and students, and faculty members are also currently working on developing Continuing Medical Education modules related to planetary health.*

**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 <b>(a) standalone lecture(s)</b> . (2 points)	
There is <b>minimal/no</b> education for sustainable healthcare. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<i>Score explanation: At the University of Illinois College of Medicine, ESH and Planetary Health are occasionally mentioned in standalone lectures through years 1 and 2. However, they are not recurrent or emphasized themes, and are not sufficiently integrated into the curriculum.</i>	

<b>1.22. Does your <u>medical school</u> employ a member of faculty to specifically oversee and take responsibility for the incorporation of planetary health and sustainable healthcare as a theme throughout the course?</b>	
Yes, the <b>medical school</b> has a specific faculty/staff member responsible for overseeing curricular integration of planetary health and sustainable healthcare. (1 point)	
No, the <b>medical school</b> does <b>not</b> have a specific faculty/staff member responsible for overseeing curricular integration of planetary health and sustainable healthcare. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<i>Score explanation: No appointed staff to oversee curriculum integration of planetary health and sustainable healthcare.</i>	

<b>1.23. Does your health professional curriculum include teaching on civic engagement/advocacy to address the environmental and structural determinants of health?</b>	
This topic was explored <b>in depth</b> by the <b>core</b> curriculum. (3 points)	
This topic was <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<i>Score explanation: At the University of Illinois-Chicago, civic engagement/advocacy are continually addressed throughout the core curriculum in various contexts, including on addressing environmental and structural determinants of health. For one example, a lecture titled “Population Health, Structural Competency and Health Equity and Measurements of Health and Disease” describes how redlining in Chicago has resulted in environmental inequity, contributing to Chicago’s significant health disparities and encourages students to engage in advocacy for our patient population.</i>	

<b>Section Total (28 out of 75)</b>	<b>37.3%</b>
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## Interdisciplinary Research

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

<b>2.1. Are there researchers engaged in planetary health research and healthcare sustainability research at your <u>institution</u>?</b>	
Yes, there are faculty members at the <b>institution</b> who have a <b>primary</b> research focus in planetary health <b>or</b> sustainable healthcare/vetcare. (3 points)	
Yes, there are individual faculty members at the <b>institution</b> who are conducting research <b>related</b> to planetary health or healthcare sustainability, <b>OR</b> are part of a national/international sustainability working group, but it is not their primary research focus. (2 points)	
There are sustainability researchers at the <b>institution</b> , but not specifically associated with healthcare/vetcare. (1 point)	
No, there are <b>no</b> planetary health and/or sustainability researchers at the <b>institution</b> at this time. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<i>Faculty from University of Illinois COM are engaged in research through <a href="#">CACHET</a> (The Chicago Center for Health Environment), a partnership which promotes multidisciplinary environmental health research between UIC and the University of Chicago. There are three research focus groups, which include: (i) Air, Water and Soil Pollutants, (ii) Biomarkers of Exposure, Effect and Susceptibility, and (ii) Molecular and Cellular Processes on Environmental Toxicity. Faculty from our university are involved in the overall <a href="#">leadership</a> of this organization, as well as each individual focus group.</i>	

<b>2.2. Is there a dedicated department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research at your <u>institution</u>?</b>	
There is <b>at least one</b> dedicated department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research. (3 points)	
There is <b>not currently</b> a department or institute for interdisciplinary planetary health research, but there are <b>plans</b> to open one in the next 3 years. (2 points)	

There is an <b>Occupational and Environmental Health department</b> , but no interdisciplinary department or institute for planetary health research. (1 point)	
There is <b>no</b> dedicated department or institute. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Faculty from University of Illinois COM are engaged in research through <a href="#">CACHET</a> (The Chicago Center for Health Environment), a partnership which promotes multidisciplinary environmental health research between UIC and the University of Chicago. There are three research focus groups, which include: (i) Air, Water and Soil Pollutants, (ii) Biomarkers of Exposure, Effect and Susceptibility, and (ii) Molecular and Cellular Processes on Environmental Toxicity. Faculty from our university are involved in the overall leadership of this organization, as well as each individual focus group. This organization serves as a dedicated resource for planetary health research.</i></p> <p><i>The UIC <a href="#">Center for Extreme Conditions and Health Excellence</a> (CECHE) is an interdisciplinary research center at UIC that explores the connections between weather, environment, infrastructure, and health. The center houses a research project team that explores weather and human health connections. CECHE offers three different branches, which all offer opportunities for medical students to be involved in research surrounding planetary health and nature-based solutions.</i></p> <p><i>UIC also recently inaugurated a new center dedicated to <a href="#">Climate and Health Equity</a>. This research center will be funded by the NIH as part of the Climate Change and Health Initiative. With this funding, both research and community engagement opportunities will be provided.</i></p>	

<b>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?</b>	
Yes, there is a process in which community members impacted by climate and environmental injustice have <b>decision-making power</b> in the climate + environmental research agenda. (3 points)	
Yes, there is a process in which community members impacted by climate and environmental injustice <b>advise</b> the climate + environmental research agenda. (2 points)	
<b>No</b> , but there are <b>current efforts</b> to establish a process for community members to advise or make decisions on the research agenda. (1 point)	
There is <b>no</b> process, and <b>no</b> efforts to create such a process. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Our community engagement team has been starting to build up several initiatives to connect with local municipal leaders in the western suburbs regarding climate change and health. There is a process by which communities can give input, including those who suffer from environmental justice.</i></p> <p><i>Community members can provide input as partners to various community advisory boards throughout our institution, including (but not limited to) our Cancer Center as well as through Center for Clinical and Translational Science's Community Engagement &amp; Advisory Board</i></p>	

[\(CEAB\)](#). On CEAB, both academic health researchers and community leaders provide feedback on promotional materials, questionnaires, surveys and interview guides, including culturally appropriate language and approaches.

There are also several offices of community engagement at UI Health and UIC at large, including the Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships ([OCEAN-HP](#)). One of OCEAN-HP's mission principles is to "bring together faculty and community scholars in mutually beneficial relationships that serve as the engagement interface for supporting, initiating, coordinating and celebrating community and University partnerships."

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

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

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

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

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

Score Assigned:

2

The university has a central website for the [Planning, Sustainability, and Project Management Department](#). Within this website, the [Sustainability](#) page provides information on [funding](#), opportunities to [connect](#) with other volunteers, participate in the Chancellor's sub-committee on Sustainability and Energy, and information on UIC's own climate commitments. The website offers a link to subscribe to "[Greenlights](#)" which is UIC's newsletter geared towards upcoming events and internship/scholarship activities. However, the website could offer more comprehensive access to upcoming events and relevant opportunities.

**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 <b>institution</b> has not hosted any conferences directly, but they have provided financial support for a local planetary health event. (1 point)	
No, the <b>institution</b> has not hosted a conference on topics related to planetary health in the past three years. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	4
<p><i>The University of Illinois organized and hosted the <a href="#">Illinois Weather and Public Health Response Summit</a> in November, 2025. This two day summit brought together Illinois public health professionals, healthcare providers, community organizers, and more. Adverse weather-related health impacts and emergency preparation strategies were discussed.</i></p> <p><i>In June, 2025, UIC collaborated with FutureEarth and Belmont Forum to host the <a href="#">Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress</a>. Though this event was not specifically targeting human health interactions, it was an opportunity for research, governmental, business, and NGO leaders from more than a hundred different countries to convene and share their sustainability innovations.</i></p> <p><i>UIC funded and hosted a three day seminar called <a href="#">Climate Wayfinding</a> in November, 2025. This was an in-person seminar for UIC undergraduate and graduate students across disciplines to explore methods of integrating climate activism into their professional and personal lives.</i></p> <p><i>In 2024, the Great Lakes Center for Reproductive and Children's Environmental Health organized a Reproductive Environmental Health Virtual Conference on <a href="#">Chemicals, Pollution, and Pregnancy</a> which was directed towards OB/GYNs, family physicians, pediatricians, midwives, APNs, and residents.</i></p>	

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

<b>Section Total (14 out of 17)</b>	<b>82%</b>
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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.*

<b>3.1. Does your <u>institution</u> partner with community organisations to promote planetary and health?</b>	
Yes, the <b>institution</b> meaningfully partners with <b>multiple</b> community organisations to promote planetary and environmental health. (3 points)	
Yes, the <b>institution</b> meaningfully partners with <b>one</b> community organisation to promote planetary and environmental health. (2 points)	
The <b>institution</b> does not partner with community organisations, but participates in community focused events relating to planetary health. (1 point)	
No, there is <b>no</b> such meaningful community partnership. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation: Score explanation: At UIC, the <a href="#">Center for Extreme Conditions and Health Excellence (CECHE)</a> has a <a href="#">Community Engagement Core (COEC)</a> that is “dedicated to advancing community-driven environmental justice research and fostering meaningful partnerships to develop effective climate health equity solutions for urban populations in Chicago and beyond. The COEC bridges the gap between communities, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and researchers to build capacity for sustainable, community-led climate health solutions.”</i></p> <p><i>UIC also hosted a Sustainability tableing event with Forest Preserves of Cook County during their Earth Month series in April. They offered opportunities to learn about local forest preserve resources.</i></p>	

<b>3.2. Does your <u>institution</u> offer community-facing courses or events regarding planetary health?</b>	
The <b>institution</b> offers community-facing courses or events at least once every year. (3 points)	
The <b>institution</b> 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 <b>institution</b> has promoted community-facing courses or events, but was not involved in planning those courses or events. (1 point)	
The <b>institution</b> has not offered such community-facing courses or events. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<i>Score explanation: UIC provided support for the <a href="#">Anthropocene Consequences event</a>. It was a four-day event that brought “a wide range of disciplines and practices into dialogue.” They describe it as “a collective experiment in ecological science, environmental justice, artistic activism and organizing under increasingly chaotic conditions.” This event is open to the public, however, it seemed more intended for an academic audience rather than a community audience.</i>	

<b>3.3. Does your <u>institution</u> have regular coverage of issues related to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare in university update communications?</b>	
Yes, all students <b>regularly</b> 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 <b>some courses</b> . (1 point)	
Students <b>do not</b> receive communications about planetary health or sustainable healthcare. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<i>Score explanation: The Office of Planning, Sustainability, and Project Management produces “Greenlights” which is a regular newsletter filled with updates on UIC’s progress towards its climate commitments, as well as other funding and internship opportunities. This newsletter is <a href="#">available for subscription</a> to all UIC students/faculty. However, it is not automatically sent to all students.</i>	

<b>3.4. Does the <u>institution</u> or <u>main affiliated hospital trust</u> 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?</b>	
Yes, the <b>institution</b> or <b>main affiliated hospital trust</b> offers multiple in-person or online courses relating to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare for post-graduate providers, including at least one with a primary focus of planetary health. (2 points)	
Yes, the <b>institution</b> or <b>main affiliated hospital trust</b> offers one course relating to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare for post-graduate providers. (1 point)	
There are <b>no</b> such accessible courses for post-graduate providers. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0

*Score explanation: UIC does not 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.*

**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: At UIC, the pediatrics clinics have accessible materials regarding environmental exposure to lead. The Great Lakes Center for Reproductive and Children's Environmental Health, affiliated with the UIC School of Public Health, also offers resources on a variety of [environmental exposures](#) in multiple languages.*

**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:

0

*Score explanation: UIC does not have accessible materials for patients on the effects of climate change and their impact on health.*

**Section Total ( 7 out of 14)**

**50%**

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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

*The University of Illinois offers funding for short-term and long-term sustainability projects through the [Sustainability Fund](#). Applications for funding are accepted from undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in addition to student organizations and faculty.*

*The Sustainability Fund Advisory Board is composed of student voting members, with faculty and staff in an advisory role. Together, this board allocates project funding based on alignment with the UIC Climate Commitment Action Plan 2024, student involvement, long-term cost benefit, and interdisciplinary collaboration. In the fiscal year of 2025, the fund provided \$263,900 in funding to new sustainability projects. These included several projects around improving bike access, the installation of bird-safe window film, and repurposing old office supplies.*

*A full list of the new and ongoing projects funded in the 2024 fiscal year can be found in the [UIC Sustainability Fund Annual Report 2025](#).*

## 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

*Medical students at the University of Illinois can perform research related to planetary health and sustainability, but this requires student initiative to seek out mentorship and make connections with centers and organizations conducting research. For example, the school of public health has many [environmental health research projects](#) and PIs listed on their website students can reach out to. Additionally, an interdisciplinary [Center for Extreme Conditions and Health Excellence](#) research and community engagement was recently inaugurated. Despite these projects, there is no specific research or fellowship program at the institution for medical students interested in planetary health research.*

*The university formerly offered a [Summer Fellowship on Climate and the Environment](#), but this has not been active since the Summer of 2023.*

**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:

2

*The University of Illinois School of Public Health has a website highlighting current [environmental health research](#) projects, including details about each project's principal investigator, funding, and duration.*

**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 <b>not</b> a student organisation at my institution dedicated to planetary health or sustainability in healthcare. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<i>The University of Chicago College of Medicine has an Ecology and Sustainability in Medicine student interest group that is eligible to receive event funding from the institution, and has a designated faculty advisor. This group aims to increase awareness of how planetary health and OneHealth impact medical practice, as well as offering volunteer opportunities.</i>	

<b>4.5. Is there a student liaison representing sustainability interests who serves on a <u>department or institutional</u> decision-making council to advocate for curriculum reform and/or sustainability best practices?</b>	
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
<i>The UIC Planning, Sustainability and Project Management division includes a Chancellor's Committee on Sustainability and Energy (CCSE) with 5 subcommittees focused on carbon neutrality, zero waste, net zero water, biodiversity, and a transformative scholarship opportunity. Each subcommittee is made up of staff, faculty, and students and hosts public meetings with the campus community.</i>	
<i>UIC also has a Tree Advisory Committee focused on meeting the standards of the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree Campus recognition. This committee is required to include at least one student (undergraduate or graduate), faculty, facility management, and community member.</i>	

<b>4.6. In the past year, has the <u>institution</u> had one or more co-curricular planetary health programs or initiatives in the following categories? (1 point each)</b>	<b>Score</b>
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.	0
Wilderness or outdoors programs (e.g., that organise hiking, backpacking, kayaking, or other outings for students)	1

*The University of Illinois Chicago Sustainability Fund supports the [UIC Heritage Garden](#) on the undergraduate campus, which gives students the opportunity to learn about environmental sustainability and gardening. Additionally, UIC hosts an [annual garden walk](#) at the Dorothy Bradley Atkins Medicinal Plant Garden that is open to the public. The food security curriculum also featured speakers from an urban agriculture organization.*

*Students at the University of Illinois College of Medicine participate in medical colloquia throughout the year covering various topics, some of which have featured plant-based and herbal medicine, as well as a session focused on the health benefits of plant-based diets. The Ecology and Sustainability in Medicine group also hosted a speaker series on the intersection of planetary health and women's health/reproduction.*

*The University of Illinois Chicago has had various recent art and culture events highlighting sustainability and environmental justice. These include a [mural](#) outside the UIC Latino Cultural Center celebrating pollinators, and [a series of exhibitions](#) with Chicago artists that included an art festival, film screening, and an open mic night centered on sustainability, land stewardship, and environmental justice.*

*This same series by the UIC Latino Cultural Center also included a discussion with local artists about environmental and food justice in their communities and their current work.*

*There is a wilderness medicine interest group at the University of Illinois Chicago College of Medicine. They hosted a camping expedition to Devil's Lake State Park in Wisconsin and to Pictured Rocks County Park in Iowa, as well as a ski trip to Wisconsin's Cascade Mountains.*

<b>Section Total (13 out of 15)</b>	<b>87%</b>
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# Campus Sustainability

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

5.1. Does your <u>institution</u> have an Office of Sustainability?	
Yes, there is an Office of Sustainability with multiple full-time staff dedicated to campus sustainability. If the Office of Sustainability serves the entire campus, there is <b>at least one designated staff member</b> for sustainability at the hospital. (3 points)	
There is an Office of Sustainability with one or more full-time staff dedicated to campus sustainability, but <b>no specific staff member</b> in charge of hospital sustainability. (2 points)	
There are <b>no salaried sustainability staff</b> , but there is a sustainability task force or committee. (1 point)	
There are <b>no</b> staff members <b>or</b> task force responsible for overseeing campus sustainability. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>            UIC's Office of Sustainability was originally formed in 2008 and later became known as the <a href="#">Department of Planning, Sustainability, and Project Management</a> after joining with other planning and project management departments in 2020. As part of PSPM's Zero Waste initiatives, individual departments - such as the UI Health Hospital - have Green Teams run by volunteer staff and faculty members. <a href="#">The Hospital Green Team</a> is listed as one of the groups from which direct engagement was sought while developing the 2024 <a href="#">Climate Commitment Action Plan</a>.</p>	

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

*Score explanation:*

UIC's Energy and Carbon Plan aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 (state of IL is 2045). However, based on UIC's 2024 carbon inventory, UIC is not on track to become carbon neutral by 2050.

**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:

0

*Score explanation:* Steam energy on west campus makes up <20% of energy.

**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:

2

*Score explanation:*

Per our campus's [climate commitments](#):

- All major renovations and new construction projects must achieve LEED Gold (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification and aspire to the Platinum level of certification, concentrating in areas that drastically reduce building energy use.

- If projects are greater than \$5M, it must also register with the Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI), while complying with the CAIP checklist for UIC projects.
- If the project is less than \$5M, it must only comply with the CAIP checklist for UIC projects and submitted to the university. If UIC buildings are to contribute to UIC becoming a Carbon Neutral Campus by 2050, they are to be designed towards the path of Net Zero Energy ready.
- All buildings shall reduce energy demand of buildings well below ASHRAE Standard 90.1, the commercial provisions of the latest International Energy Conservation Code, and shall exceed standards set by the current Illinois Energy Conservation Code.

Per the 2025 CCAP Annual Report:

- Retrofits of University Hall and the Behavioral Science Building have begun
- The new Computer Design and Research Learning Center building is seeking LEED Gold certification

**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:*

"Carbon Neutral Commitment 14, Transit Incentives, introduced the UPASS+ program with added Metra options this Fall 2024 to increase transit use. UIC was also rated a [Silver Bicycle Friendly University](#) in 2024.

On our East campus, UIC is remodeling bike lanes on Halsted Street to be safer between Van Buren and Roosevelt. Also in progress:

- Carbon Neutral Commitment 13, Transportation Demand, "create a Transportation Demand Management Plan that identifies incentives for low-emissions transportation modes"
- Carbon Neutral Commitment 15, Sustainable Transportation Marketing, "establish a strategic plan for campus communications by 2027 as part of the Transportation Framework Plan"
- Carbon Neutral Commitment 16, Fleet Fuel Switching, "require a percentage of new fleet vehicle purchases to be low or zero-emission by 2027" & "identify an outside funding

source for an evaluation study to form a strategic plan to transition certain fleet vehicles to electric vehicles by 2025"

- Carbon Neutral Commitment 17, Parking Innovations, "provide incentives to reduce single-occupancy vehicle commutes by increasing awareness of driving costs. UIC should engage with university workers and labor unions to identify mutually agreeable parking and transportation incentives which help achieve shared objectives" & "pilot one program changing the parking cost structure or other structure by 2027."

**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:*

In addition to conventional recycling options, UIC East Campus launched a composting program in December 2024 partnering with UIC Dining Services at 605 Commons in Student Center East. Due to the program's success, [JST Cafe was added](#) in January 2025.

Aligns with Zero Waste Commitment 15, Composting, "Increase composting by 2% annually at consumer locations and pilot a post-consumer option by the end of FY2025."

Progress towards outdoor recycling is also being made, with an [ongoing study being conducted with solar powered Bigbelly bins in the Quad](#) for recycling cans and bottles.

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

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

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

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

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

Score Assigned:

2

*Score explanation:*

Zero Waste Commitment 2, Food and Beverage Contracts, has been kept from the previous 2018 plan. However, no progress data is available from 2018 until now.

In 2024, UIC received a [grant from the EPA](#) to switch to sustainable food packaging. Students who dine at 605 Commons Dining Hall and JST Cafe have the option to [ask for a reusable container](#).

Per the CCAP 2025 Annual Report, SodexoMagic, UIC's dining partner, has increased locally-sourced food options in their dining services.

**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:

2

*Score explanation:*

Procurement guidelines exist but no evidence that UIC Medical College follows them.

- Zero Waste Commitment 2, Food and Beverage Contracts, to meet 1 of 3 AASHE STARS guidelines
- Zero Waste Commitment 5, Paper Policy Compliance, to "make compliance (30% post-consumer recycled content or higher) the default option on the campus purchasing tool (iBuy) for the Sustainable Paper Policy within FY2025."

Per the CCAP 2025 Annual Report Final:

- CCSE zero waste subcommittee will continue to try to advocate for procurement strategies which reduce plastic use
- There has been no progress towards updating procurements that require materials to be durable, replaceable, reusable, recyclable, or compostable by FY 2026.

**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 <b>no</b> sustainability guidelines for institution events. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<i>Score explanation:</i> Per the CCAP 2025 Annual Report, the Sustainable Events Guide has been updated and submitted for approval, but is not yet available.	

<b>5.10. Does your <u>institution</u> have programs and initiatives to assist with making lab spaces more environmentally sustainable?</b>	
Yes, the institution has <b>programs</b> and <b>initiatives</b> to assist with making lab spaces more environmentally sustainable. (2 points)	
There are <b>guidelines</b> on how to make lab spaces more environmentally sustainable, but not programs or initiatives. (1 point)	
There are <b>no</b> efforts at the institution to make lab spaces more sustainable. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<i>Score explanation:</i> Zero Waste Commitment 9, Lab Supply Inventory and Sharing Program: Increase awareness of existing LabShare program to help old labs avoid unnecessary waste disposal and new labs avoid redundant purchases. PSPM and Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHSO) to establish a process for including LabShare information when new labs are established by FY2025.	

<b>5.11. Does your <u>institution's</u> endowment portfolio investments include fossil-fuel companies?</b>	
The institution is <b>entirely divested</b> from fossil fuels <b>and</b> has made a <b>commitment to reinvest divested funds</b> into renewable energy companies or renewable energy campus initiatives. (4 points)	
The institution is <b>entirely divested</b> from fossil fuels. (3 points)	
The institution has <b>partially divested</b> from fossil fuel companies <b>or</b> has made a <b>commitment to fully divest</b> , but <b>currently</b> still has fossil fuel investments. (2 points)	
The institution has <b>not divested</b> from fossil-fuel companies, but faculty and/or students are <b>conducting organised advocacy</b> for divestment. (1 point)	
Yes, the institution has investments with fossil-fuel companies and there have been <b>no efforts</b> to change that. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<i>Score explanation:</i>	

Our Climate Commitments Action Plan interestingly makes no mention of divestment, likely because UIC has no direct control over the UI Foundation's investments. UIC's last AASHE STARS report did note that UI Foundation has investments in Blackrock, which includes fossil fuels. Note, while UIllinois-Champaign has significant student support for divestment, there is no equivalent student group at UIC or UICOM. Most recently, [UIUC students introduced a bill](#) to the IL General Assembly that would require UI Foundation to [divest from fossil fuels](#).

**Section Total (17 out of 32)**

**53%**

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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 Illinois Chicago College of Medicine.

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

Section	Raw Score %	Letter Grade
<b>Planetary Health Curriculum (30%)</b>	$(28/75) \times 100 = 37\%$	D+
<b>Interdisciplinary Research (17.5%)</b>	$(14/17) \times 100 = 82\%$	A-
<b>Community Outreach and Advocacy (17.5%)</b>	$(7/14) \times 100 = 50\%$	C
<b>Support for Student-led Planetary Health Initiatives (17.5%)</b>	$(13/15) \times 100 = 87\%$	A
<b>Campus Sustainability (17.5%)</b>	$(17/32) \times 100 = 53\%$	C
<b>Institutional Grade</b>	$(A \times 0.3 + B \times 0.175 + C \times 0.175 + D \times 0.175 + E \times 0.175) = 59\%$	C+

# Report Card Trends

## Section Overview

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

