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# Planetary Health Report Card (Medicine) 2026: *University of Limerick*

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2025-2026 Contributing Team:

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## Summary of Findings

<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>C+</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>C</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The University of Limerick School of Medicine has addressed, or is in the process of addressing several curriculum recommendations from the 2025 PHRC, including the appointment of a faculty member to oversee curricular integration of planetary health and sustainable healthcare and membership to the <i>Global Consortium on Climate Health Education</i>. Using the GCCHE guide, several Year 1 PBL cases have been updated to include discussion points relevant to climate change and the Year 3 Special Study Module topics have also been expanded.</li> <li>● <b>Recommendations:</b> To better integrate planetary health and sustainable healthcare learning throughout the 4-year curriculum, it is recommended that the Clinical Skills environmental history taking instructions be modernized to include things like wildfire smoke exposure, air pollution and mould after flooding. Secondly, we recommend that the health professional curriculum include teaching on civic engagement/advocacy to address the environmental and structural determinants of health. To achieve this goal, the School of Medicine could avail of the following resources:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u><i>Why and How Civic Health Should Be Incorporated Into Medical Education</i></u>. Barrere-Cain et al., 2022. <i>Academic Medicine</i>.</li> <li>○ <u><i>Civic Engagement: A Vital Sign of Health and Democracy</i></u>. Philip M. Alerbti. AAMC.</li> <li>○ <u><i>CRHE Module: Interaction between health care systems, government policy, and environmental advocacy</i></u>.</li> <li>○ <i>Medical Schools Council (UK), Education for Sustainable Healthcare, A curriculum for the UK. Page 21. Professionalism, leadership and achieving structural change.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Interdisciplinary Research</b>	<b>A-</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The University of Limerick demonstrates strong commitment to planetary health through interdisciplinary research and community engagement. Faculty expertise in crystal engineering, sustainable energy, and environmental science is supported by the Bernal Institute, Centre for Environmental Research, and Health Research Institute, aligning with UN SDG 3. Citizen focused initiatives and hosting the 2025 Health Promoting Campuses Conference further highlights the university's institutional leadership in research.</li> <li>● <b>Recommendations:</b> One recommendation is to formalize its planetary health identity by joining national or international networks. This would improve visibility on planetary health leadership initiatives and strengthen links between health and environmental research centres. Expanding structured community partnerships focused on climate and health would further enhance impact and leadership in research.</li> </ul>	
<b>Community Outreach and Advocacy</b>	<b>D+</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● UL School of Medicine already has several community-facing planetary health activities, but there are clear opportunities to expand outreach and advocacy specifically targeting students and patients.</li> <li>● Aiming to incorporate these groups could help drive engagement, give individuals opportunities to participate and foster a deeper sense of personal investment in working towards planetary health and sustainability.</li> <li>● <b>Recommendations:</b> We recommend that the University of Limerick School of Medicine should continue to collaborate on projects within the community, with a greater focus on projects involving planetary health. One way this could be done is by directly participating in projects the greater university is already involved in, such as Clean Air Together Limerick. An even more direct effort could involve participating in community events like the Team Limerick Clean-Up Day, held annually on Good Friday.</li> </ul>	

<b>Support for Student-Led Initiatives</b>	<b>B</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University of Limerick has proven its support for student-led initiatives pertaining to themes of sustainability and planetary health, particularly societies run by students aimed at advocating for sustainability on campus.</li> <li>• <b>Recommendations:</b> It is recommended that the institute develop support for students interested in conducting their own planetary health/sustainability projects or research either alongside their chosen professional degree program or as part of a core curriculum/fellowship. Continuity of previous sustainability initiatives should be enforced such as the UL Student Sustainability Challenge from 2024/2025. Further, it is recommended that the student liaison representing sustainability interests on campus be included in faculty meetings to bring awareness to more sustainability options and encourage curriculum reform.</li> </ul>	
<b>Campus Sustainability</b>	<b>B</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University of Limerick has demonstrated a commitment to improving campus sustainability practices as evidenced by the implementation of near zero energy building practices in construction of the new Student Centre completed in 2025, retrofitting of existing buildings with more energy efficient features, and following the European Commission's Green Public Procurement policies. The campus has a written approved plan to reduce its carbon footprint by 2030, completed a comprehensive energy audit with plans to reduce electrical emissions, and has developed a Food Philosophy Document to guide sustainable food sourcing policies. These plans and policies, however, are still in the process of being enacted at this time.</li> <li>• <b>Recommendations:</b> While the University of Limerick has shown significant progress towards improved campus sustainability, there are areas for continued focus moving forward. Putting proposed plans and policies into practice would be a significant step towards campus sustainability in the future.</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 schools’ institutional priorities do not reflect the urgency of this danger to human health.

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

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

# Definitions & Other Considerations

## Definitions:

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

specifically targeted for medical students, can meet this metric.

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

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

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

### Scoring Matrix

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

### Other considerations:

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

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

# Planetary Health Curriculum

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

## *Curriculum: General*

<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:	0
<i>Score explanation:</i> <i>The University of Limerick School of Medicine does not currently offer elective courses as a part of the curriculum, therefore there are no options for student selected modules that integrate planetary health topics into the medical school curriculum.</i>	

## *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:	3

*Score explanation:*

*As part of the Year 2 professional competencies module, a 1-hour Public Health lecture “Environmental Health” explored the impacts of climate change (e.g., air pollution, reduced food production, water scarcity) on human health and discussed mitigation and adaptation strategies as they relate to asthma and respiratory illnesses. Further, Problem Based Learning Tutor Guides for three Year 1 cases were updated in 2026 using the [Climate Resources for Health Education](#) to include mention of the relationship between heat and the development of respiratory and cardiovascular disease, as well as the effect of heat on the elderly. Year 1 case review is ongoing.*

**1.3. Does your medical school 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 impacts of extreme weather events on individual health and/or on healthcare systems were discussed during a Year 2 Public Health lecture titled “Environmental Health”. Topics such as the impact of flooding, desertification and other natural disasters were discussed in relation to the impact on mental health, infectious disease spread, exposure to toxic substances, and increased demands on health systems. Further, the Problem Based Learning Tutor guides for three Year 1 cases were updated in 2026 using the Climate Resources for Health Education to include conversation points about the effect of extreme weather on respiratory and cardiovascular health. Year 1 PBL case review is ongoing.*

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

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

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

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

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

Score Assigned:

2

*Score explanation:*

*In a Year 1 Public Health lecture titled “Water and Sanitation”, the link between climate change and increased risk of cholera was mentioned on a single slide. In a Year 2 Public Health lecture*

*“Environmental Health”, infectious diseases, specifically vector-borne diseases and diarrheal, were briefly mentioned as one of the consequences of large-scale floods.*

**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:*

*At the University of Limerick School of Medicine, a Year 2 Public Health lecture “Environmental Health” included designated slides outlining risk factors for asthma, highlighting air pollution specifically as it relates to climate change. Further, the Problem Based Learning Tutor Guide for a case on Asthma has been updated in 2026 using the Climate Resources for Health Education to include conversation points around the effect of air pollution on respiratory health.*

**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:*

*In the Year 2 Public Health lecture “Environmental Health”, cardiovascular disease was briefly mentioned in a broader discussion about the wide-reaching impacts of climate change on human health. Specifically, sea level rise/salt water intrusion, heatwaves and air pollution were listed as contributors to cardiovascular disease. Further, the Problem Based Learning Tutor Guides for Year 1 cases on myocardial infarction and abdominal aortic aneurysm have been updated in 2026 using the Climate Resources for Health Education to include conversation points around the effect of extreme heat on cardiovascular risk factors, as well as implications of extreme heat on diuretic use.*

**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 <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  <i>In the Year 2 Public Health lecture “Environmental Health”, the mental health effects of environmental degradation and climate change were briefly discussed. The immediate health effects of natural disasters and fear of recurrence, threats to livelihoods, and the concept of ecological anxiety and ecological grief were introduced to students.</i></p>	

<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:</i>  <i>A Year 1 Public Health lecture “Water and Sanitation” explored the links between access to sufficient and clean water, sanitation, and cholera, but climate change was only briefly mentioned. Similarly, in a Year 2 lecture “Environmental Health”, desertification and degradation of ecosystems and their related health impacts were only briefly mentioned. As well, there are two Public Health lectures on asthma offered in Years 1 and 4 where the “One Health” approach is discussed e.g., how vaccination of animals impacts human populations and wider ecosystems.</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:</i></p>	

*In the Year 1 Public Health lecture “Water and Sanitation”, emphasis was given to the fact that low- and middle-income countries disproportionately experience water access and waste management challenges that contribute to disease. We also learned that diarrheal diseases are most prevalent in children. Likewise, in the Year 2 Public Health lecture “Environmental Health”, the lecturer communicated that the impacts of climate change are magnified in low- and middle-income countries that are already struggling with poverty, migration, conflict, and fragile health systems.*

**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 Public Health lectures in Year 1 and 2 highlight the fact that low- and middle-income countries experience a greater burden of disease related to climate change.*

***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:*

*The medical curriculum at the University of Limerick does not address the reproductive health effects of industry-related environmental toxins.*

**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 <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<i>Score explanation:</i> <i>The medical curriculum at the University of Limerick does not address human-caused environmental threats that are relevant to the university's surrounding community.</i>	

<b>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?</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:</i> <i>The medical curriculum at the University of Limerick does not emphasise the importance of Indigenous knowledge and value systems as essential components of planetary health solutions.</i>	

<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:	0
<i>Score explanation:</i> <i>Recommendations have been made to relevant Professional Competencies lectures (Public Health, Sociology) to include discussion about how historically redlined communities are at risk of increased air pollution exposure and extreme heat due to higher densities of paved surfaces and fewer green spaces. Implementation of these recommendations is ongoing.</i>	

**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:</i>  <i>The Problem Based Learning Tutor Guides at the University of Limerick School of Medicine were updated in 2026 using the Climate Resources for Health Education to include conversation points about how plant-based diets are beneficial for human and planetary health in the context of promoting lifestyle modifications for COPD patients. This topic was further covered in a Year 2 Public Health lecture titled 'Cardiovascular Disease'.</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:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  <i>In a Year 2 Public Health lecture, students are made aware of the fact that resource-intensive hospitals are responsible for ~60% of public consumption, and the <a href="#">Global Green and Healthy Hospitals</a> initiative and website is signposted to students.</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)	2
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	1

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)	
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)	1
<b>Waste production</b> within healthcare <b>clinics</b> and strategies for reducing waste in clinical activities (e.g. single use items in the inpatient or outpatient setting) (1 point)	1
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  <i>In Year 3, in the lecture Money Health and Medicine, certain aspects of waste, over-investigation and over-treatment are addressed, and examined in the Year 4 MCQ examination.</i></p> <p><i>All Year 2 students participate in the <a href="#">Med-Well</a>, a weekly program consisting of a short presentation by local physicians or researchers in exercise and nutritional science on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle for patients and doctors, followed by a group exercise class. In one of the talks, the concept of 'social prescribing' was introduced to students in the context of demonstrating simple exercises and prescribing exercise to patients of all ages and abilities to promote wellbeing and independence.</i></p> <p><i>Information regarding the impact of inhalers on the environment and the environmental benefit of dry powdered inhalers over metered dose inhalers was added to a Problem Based Learning Tutor Guide for a Year 1 case on asthma.</i></p> <p><i>Re-usable tourniquettes are available in Clinical Skills tutorial rooms for students to practice using these instead of single-use tourniquettes. The School of Medicine has also stopped the bulk ordering of plastic consumables and transitioned to biodegradable gloves.</i></p>	

### **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:	0

*Score explanation: The medical curriculum at the University of Limerick does not introduce strategies to have conversations with patients about the health effects of climate change.*

**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:

2

*Score explanation: At the University of Limerick School of Medicine, students in Year 1 and 2 Clinical Skills are trained to take a full history which includes questions about environmental (e.g., through travel, home environment) and occupational exposures, however history taking instructions could be modernized to include consideration for exposures related to climate change including wildfire smoke, air pollution and mould after flooding.*

### ***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:

4

*Score explanation:*

*Following the publication of the inaugural University of Limerick School of Medicine PHRC in 2025, a Special Interest Group (SIG) consisting of various School of Medicine (SoM) faculty members was created in the 2024/25 school year with the goal of implementing major improvements to planetary health education at the medical school. The SIG consists of faculty members who have voluntarily enrolled in [courses](#) to advance their knowledge of effective strategies to engage in curriculum redesign, with the goal of including more emphasis on planetary health in the SoM curriculum. To this end, the school has also joined the Global Consortium on Climate Health Education (GCCHE) and European Network on Climate Health Education (ENCHE), and is collaborating with a newly formed student group, UL Medical Students for the Environment (MSE), to update the PBL Tutor Guides, Learning Objectives and Professional Competency lectures to include intersections between planetary health and human health(care). The SIG and MSE groups are also working to revise lectures given in the Professional Competencies module of the curriculum to include more emphasis on planetary health. Finally, the Year 3 Special Study Module (SSM), which is compulsory for all Year 3 students, has been updated*

to include an option to complete the SSM on a topic related to planetary health and sustainable healthcare.

**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:*

*The University of Limerick School of Medicine addresses planetary health education primarily through stand-alone Public Health lectures: there are two Public Health lectures on asthma offered in Years 1 and 4 where the “One Health” approach is discussed, and a Public Health lecture on Climate Change and Health was recently added for Year 3. Additionally, PBL case review is ongoing with several Year 1 cases now including discussion points around the intersections between climate change and asthma and heart disease. Finally, the Year 3 Special Study Module guideline was updated in 2025, and now includes an option to complete the project on a topic related to environmental health, sustainability, and health care.*

**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:*

*As of the 2025/26 academic year, the University of Limerick School of Medicine does have a specific faculty member responsible for overseeing curricular integration of planetary health and sustainable healthcare: Dr Enas Elsisy, [Enas.ElSissy@ul.ie](mailto:Enas.ElSissy@ul.ie)*

**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 <b>briefly</b> covered in the <b>core</b> curriculum. (2 points)	
This topic was covered in <b>elective</b> coursework. (1 point)	
This topic was <b>not</b> covered. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  <i>Both the Public Health and GP Social Inclusion guest lectures in Years 1 and 2 mention the influential position physicians have in society and encourage awareness of structural determinants of health, however in-depth and practical teaching on civic engagement and advocacy is not included in the core curriculum.</i></p>	
<b>Section Total (44 out of 75)</b>	<b>58.67%</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
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  <i>There are faculty members at the institution whose primary research focus is planetary health and sustainability. For instance, faculty members have research focuses on fundamental and applied aspects of crystal engineering, aimed at addressing global challenges of carbon capture, water purification, and better medicines. Faculty have also focused on research topics looking at computationally-guided crystal engineering of organic crystals for pharmaceutical and energy harvesting applications.</i>  <i>Additionally, the <a href="#">Health Research Institute</a> of the University of Limerick aligns with global and national health strategies, particularly the <a href="#">UN Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Wellbeing</a>.</i></p>	

<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>Score explanation:</i>  <a href="#">The Centre for Environmental Research</a> at the University of Limerick is a multidisciplinary research centre that is focused on conducting research across several faculties (including Science and Engineering) to access expertise across several disciplines such as circular economy, sustainable development and waste management, life cycle analysis, and environmental biology. Additionally, the <a href="#">Bernal Institute</a> at the University of Limerick is a dedicated department that is focused on “advancing science for a sustainable future in health, energy and the environment.” Specifically, the Bernal Institute utilizes work in the materials research space to pioneer environmental solutions in areas of waste resource recovery, bio-economy, ecology, process engineering, and more, with the aim to “champion a sustainable future.”</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:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  The University of Limerick has established different programs and initiatives that enable citizens in the community impacted by climate change to collaborate on and influence research agendas. For example, there is currently a collaborative initiative between the University of Limerick and County Council, called “<a href="#">Citizen Innovation Lab</a>.” This lab serves as a space for observation, collaboration, and experimentation through citizen-led initiatives and public engagement activities. The Citizen Innovation Lab is well established as supporting citizen-centered research, policy, and community projects.</p>	

<b>2.4. Does your institution have a planetary health website that centralises ongoing and past research related to health and the environment?</b>
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There is an <b>easy-to-use, adequately comprehensive</b> website that <b>centralises</b> 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 <b>attempts to centralise</b> various campus resources related to health and the environment, but it is hard-to-use, not updated, or not adequately comprehensive. (2 points)	
The <b>institution</b> has an <b>Office of Sustainability website</b> that includes <b>some</b> resources related to health and the environment. (1 point)	
There is <b>no</b> website. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  The University of Limerick has a centralized <a href="#">sustainability website</a> through which individuals can access information about the centre for sustainability, sustainability training, and sustainability reporting. The website also has important links for students which advertises sustainability news stories, engagement opportunities, and campus initiatives. Further, <a href="#">UL Sustainability News</a> is an easy-to-use website with regular updates about sustainability initiatives, and highlights leaders in sustainability at the university. However, relevant funding opportunities are not included in these sources.</p>	

<b>2.5. Has your <u>institution</u> recently hosted a conference or symposium on topics related to planetary health?</b>	
Yes, the <b>institution</b> has hosted at least one conference or symposium on topics related to planetary health in the past year. (4 points)	
Yes, the <b>institution</b> has hosted at least one conference or symposium on topics related to sustainable healthcare/vetcare in the past year. (3 points)	
Yes, the <b>institution</b> has hosted a conference on topics related to planetary health / sustainable healthcare/vetcare in the past three years. (2 points)	
The <b>institution</b> has not hosted any conferences directly, but they have provided financial support for a local planetary health event. (1 point)	
No, the <b>institution</b> has not hosted a conference on topics related to planetary health in the past three years. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  In 2025, the <a href="#">International Health Promoting Campuses Conference</a> was hosted at the University of Limerick. This was a four day conference involving students, researchers, policymakers and higher education institution leaders to explore strategies for healthier and more sustainable campus environments.</p>	

**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 Limerick School of Medicine is a member of the Global Consortium for Health Education and European Network on Climate Health and Education.*

**Section Total (15 out of 17)**

**88.24%**

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## Community Outreach and Advocacy

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

<b>3.1. Does your <u>institution</u> partner with community organisations to promote planetary and environmental 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:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>            Although the greater university, as per UL Engage, is heavily involved in community sustainable projects, the School of Medicine is not specifically involved in these projects. While the School of Medicine's involvement in UL Engage does display impactful and meaningful collaboration with local organizations, it fails to contribute to projects within the scope of planetary health. Of note is the University of Limerick's School of Medicine associate professor's article on <a href="#">The Conversation titled 'House burping: what is this German habit and is it good for your health?'</a> This article talks of issues of air pollution and its impacts on human health, thereby working towards planetary health goals.</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:	3
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  The University of Limerick does host health promotion events that emphasize themes of wellbeing and sustainability, such as the <a href="#">International Health Promoting Campuses Conference</a>. Additionally, UL participates in events such as the <a href="#">Limerick Festival of Science</a>, which is community-facing and often includes themes of biodiversity, environmental protection, sustainability and natural habitats.</p>	

<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:	0
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  The University of Limerick does publish updates related to sustainability and planetary health on their official website and associated social media pages; however, these are not sent consistently as direct communications to students.</p>	

<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
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  There is currently no dedicated post-graduate professional education in the University of Limerick or associated teaching hospitals related to planetary health. Previously, some “Grand Rounds” in</p>	

*associated teaching hospitals have covered topics related to planetary health, but this has not occurred since 2022.*

**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:

0

*Score explanation:*

*There are currently no readily accessible patient-directed materials available related to environmental health exposures. Although the University of Limerick engages in research in associated topics and promotes the importance of clean air and clean water through [UL Healthy Environment](#), information on environmental health exposures are not currently presented in patient-directed clinical education formats.*

**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:*

*There are currently no readily accessible patient-directed materials available related to the health impacts of climate change. Although the University of Limerick engages in research in associated topics and highlights general connections between clean environments and health through [UL Healthy Environment](#), information on this matter is not currently presented in patient-directed clinical education formats.*

**Section Total (5 out of 14)**

**35.71%**

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# Support for Student-Led Planetary Health Initiatives

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

4.1. Does your <b>institution</b> offer support for students interested in enacting a sustainability initiative/QI project?	
Yes, the <b>institution</b> <i>either</i> offers grants for students to enact sustainability initiatives/QI projects <i>or</i> sustainability QI projects are part of the core curriculum. (2 points)	
The <b>institution</b> encourages sustainability QI projects (to fulfil clerkship or longitudinal requirements) and offers resources to help students succeed in these projects, <b>but</b> there is no student funding available and there is no requirement to participate. (1 point)	
No, the institution does not offer opportunities or support for sustainability initiatives or QI projects. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>            This year, sustainable healthcare was added to the list of possible topics for the Year 3 Special Study Module (SSM), a research project. There is no student funding available for SSM.</p>	

4.2. Does your <b>institution</b> offer opportunities for students to do research related to planetary health and/or sustainable healthcare/vetcare?	
The <b>institution</b> has a <b>specific</b> research program or fellowship for students interested in doing planetary health/sustainable healthcare/vetcare research. (2 points)	
There are research opportunities for students to perform research related to planetary health/sustainable healthcare, but these <b>require student initiative</b> to seek them out and carry them out in their spare time. (1 point)	
There are <b>no opportunities</b> for students to engage in planetary health/sustainable healthcare research. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>            Through the <a href="#">Bernal Institute</a> at the University of Limerick, students are welcome to take part in research. From projects in sustainable energy solutions, to the environmental impact of our advancing healthcare technology. Many of these projects hold partnerships with government officials, academia, and various industries to uncover applicable real-life sustainable solutions.</p>	

Moreover, students are encouraged to do research in areas of sustainable food systems and other planetary health themes at the Health Research Institute.

There is, however, no particular program for students to do research in an area of planetary health or sustainable healthcare that would not involve students being proactive and seeking out these opportunities alongside their dedicated degree.

**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

*Score explanation:*

The [University of Limerick Sustainability Webpage](#) offers specific information related to planetary health and sustainability initiatives at UL.

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

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

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

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

Score Assigned:

2

*Score explanation:*

The University of Limerick (UL) has a [UL Environmental Society](#), a team of students who use the platform to organize campaigns to promote environmental issues relevant to campus. This society is

registered as an official society under University of Limerick Wolves Clubs & Societies, indicating it has support from faculty.

**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:*

*The University of Limerick has a student representative on the UL Environmental Committee. They support sustainability best practices. The SoM faculty SIG working on planetary health education at the medical school has also been engaging the students leading the PHRC work and members of the PHRC/UL Medical Students for the Environment student club attend their meetings.*

4.6. In the past year, has the <u>institution</u> had one or more co-curricular planetary health programs or initiatives in the following categories? (1 point each)	Score
Projects where students are able to gain experience in organic agriculture and sustainable food systems, such as gardens, farms, community supported agriculture (CSA), fishery programs, or urban agriculture projects.	0
Panels, speaker series, or similar events related to planetary health that have students as an intended audience.	0
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.	0
Cultural arts events, installations or performances related to planetary health that have students as an intended audience.	0
Local volunteer opportunities related to building community resilience to anthropogenic environmental impacts.	1
Wilderness or outdoors programs (e.g., that organise hiking, backpacking, kayaking, or other outings for students)	1
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  <i>The University of Limerick participated in the <a href="#">International Health Promoting Campuses Conference</a> in 2025 which facilitated important conversations around the collaboration, innovation, and evaluation of health promoting activities on university campuses, with a focus on sustainability.</i></p>	

*Local volunteer opportunities related to building environmental resilience in the community include last November's [UL Student Life Community Cleanup](#), inviting all students to participate in cleaning the campus.*

*As a wilderness/outdoors program the University has an [Outdoor Pursuits Club](#) that has organized caving, climbing, orienteering sessions and more advanced training in mountaineering and outdoor climbing. Each Sunday there is a hike in the beautiful Ireland landscape. Available at any time to all members is a climbing wall located in the campus' state of the art athletics facility.*

**Section Total (9 out of 15)**

**60.00%**

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# Campus Sustainability

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

5.1. Does your <u>institution</u> have an Office of Sustainability?	
Yes, there is an Office of Sustainability with multiple full-time staff dedicated to campus sustainability. If the Office of Sustainability serves the entire campus, there is <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 staff members or task force</b> responsible for overseeing campus sustainability. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	0
<i>Score explanation:</i> <i>The University of Limerick previously had an established office of sustainability called: Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation. This office is no longer active, and there are currently no staff members or task force responsible for overseeing campus sustainability.</i>	

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:	5
<i>Score explanation:</i>	

The University of Limerick has a [Climate Action Roadmap](#), and one of the goals of this long term plan is that the university will achieve carbon neutral status by 2030. The mission of the institution is to see UL become a campus that has no net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This roadmap outlines the steps the institution plans on taking to meet their goal by 2030, and additionally provides annual reports on the milestones they have achieved within that year.

**5.3. Do buildings/infrastructure used by the institution for teaching (not including the hospital) utilize renewable energy?**

Yes, institution buildings are **100%** powered by renewable energy. (3 points)

Institution buildings source **>80%** of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (2 points)

Institution buildings source **>20%** of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (1 point)

Institution buildings source **<20%** of energy needs from off-site and/or on-site renewable energy. (0 points)

Score Assigned:

1

*Score explanation:*

*The University of Limerick has a plan to reduce their electrical emissions and have conducted a comprehensive energy audit, which helped identify key decarbonisation projects and potential funding mechanisms. The major opportunities for decarbonisation include the implementation of a district heating system, decentralised heat pumps, solar PV installations, LED lighting upgrades and extensive building retrofits. However, at present, only 65% of the institution's electricity is derived from renewable sources, mainly from off site renewables, as the university is on a grid. More information on how campus buildings are reducing their carbon footprint are highlighted by [Sustainable UL](#) on Instagram.*

**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
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  As of 2024, all future developments at the University of Limerick are being designed as Near Zero Energy Buildings. This is part of a <a href="#">European Union standard</a> that was implemented in 2020. The new Student Centre that opened in 2025, which was built on a part-brownfield site, is one example of this. In 2024, they began retrofitting projects with the installation of solar PV, heat pumps, glazing upgrades, cavity wall insulation, and limited LED lighting in one building. They have secured funding for additional retrofitting projects, but these are currently still in the planning phase.</p>	

<p><b>5.5. Has the <u>institution</u> implemented strategies to encourage and provide environmentally-friendly transportation options for students and reduce the environmental impact of commuting?</b></p>	
<p>Yes, the institution has implemented strategies to encourage and provide <b>environmentally-friendly transportation options</b> such as safe active transport, public transport, or carpooling and these options are well-utilised by students. Alternatively, the campus location is not amenable to unsustainable forms of transportation by default. (2 points)</p>	
<p>The institution has implemented <b>some</b> strategies to provide environmentally-friendly transportation options, but the options are <b>unsatisfactorily</b> accessible or advertised. (1 point)</p>	
<p>The institution has <b>not</b> implemented strategies to encourage and provide environmentally-friendly transportation options. (0 points)</p>	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  The University of Limerick has completed a variety of measures in recent years to incentivise staff and students to commute by bike or foot including: resurfacing of shared pedestrian cycle paths, new installed paths that link existing cycling paths to UL, and improving infrastructure including the installation of centrally located, covered, and secured bike parking and showering facilities (all new buildings now include showers as a standard). UL has also installed a TFI Docking station with about 60 bikes available as part of their <a href="#">Smarter Travel pathway</a>, a joint initiative between the National Transport Authority and Campus partners. In addition to this, UL campus has accommodated the first electric car sharing vehicle – whereby they have provided a parking space and permit in the UL campus for an electric car sharing vehicle, which is available to the public to use. Lastly, UL campus accommodation offers bike rentals at a reduced rate for students to encourage commuting by bike. However, off-campus clinical sites for School of Medicine students are difficult to access, and most students in third year and beyond require cars to access their placements. Information about environmentally-friendly transportation is also not emphasised in first year orientation.</p>	

<p><b>5.6. Does your <u>institution</u> have an organics recycling program (compost) and a conventional recycling program (aluminium/paper/plastic/glass)?</b></p>
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Yes, the institution has <b>both</b> compost <b>and</b> recycling programs accessible to students and faculty. (2 points)	
The institution has <b>either</b> recycling <b>or</b> compost programs accessible to students and faculty, but not both. (1 point)	
There is <b>no</b> compost or recycling program at the institution. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  <i>The University of Limerick as a whole and the School of Medicine buildings all have multiple waste bins for both trash and recycling, however does not provide access to an organics recycling bin. While the university does employ various waste reduction methods, such as food waste digesters and compactors, bins for the use of faculty and students are not readily available. The Campus Accommodation sites have implemented compost bin collection services for private use of student residents.</i></p>	

<b>5.7. Does the <u>institution</u> apply sustainability criteria when making decisions about the campus food and beverage selections (e.g. local sourcing, reduced meat, decreased plastic packaging)?</b>	
Yes, the institution has <b>adequate</b> sustainability requirements for food and beverages, including meat-free days or no red-meat, and <b>is engaged</b> in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (3 points)	
There are sustainability guidelines for food and beverages, but they are <b>insufficient or optional</b> . The institution <b>is engaged</b> in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (2 points)	
There are sustainability guidelines for food and beverages, but they are <b>insufficient or optional</b> . The institution is <b>not</b> engaged in efforts to increase food and beverage sustainability. (1 point)	
There are <b>no</b> sustainability guidelines for food and beverages. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  <i>The University of Limerick is currently in the process of invoking a new catering service, and in preparation, the University has developed a comprehensive <a href="#">Food Philosophy</a>. This document addresses the University of Limerick's future food ecosystem, with a focus on sustainability, health, and inclusivity. This Food Philosophy document currently serves as a guide to achieve sustainable food sourcing practices by 2030, however the guidelines (ex. sourcing food from farmers markets, community gardens, and edible landscapes) have not been fully enacted yet. There are multiple restaurants/cafes on campus that do use sustainable practices. In particular, The Pavilion and Terrace Bar (operated by Master Chefs) and Cafe Blas (operated by Cafe Noir) are committed to practices such as sourcing local produce and aiming to be near zero waste companies. In the past year the campus has committed to use of reusable cups at selected beverage outlets on campus.</i></p>	

<b>5.8. Does the <u>institution</u> apply sustainability criteria when making decisions about supply</b>
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<b>procurement?</b>	
Yes, the institution has <b>adequate</b> sustainability requirements for supply procurement <b>and</b> is <b>engaged</b> in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (3 points)	
There are sustainability guidelines for supply procurement, but they are <b>insufficient or optional</b> . The institution is <b>engaged</b> in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (2 points)	
There are sustainability guidelines for supply procurement, but they are <b>insufficient or optional</b> . The institution is <b>not engaged</b> in efforts to increase sustainability of procurement. (1 point)	
There are <b>no</b> sustainability guidelines for supply procurement. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	2
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  The University of Limerick has been incorporating sustainability in its tender process for several years under the guidance of the European Commission's Green Public Procurement (GPP) definition. UL has already begun training their procurement staff on green practices and is committed to providing additional training as needed to ensure staff remain up-to-date on the GPP requirements. The development of a <a href="#">Comprehensive Green Procurement Policy</a>, which will provide a clear framework on implementing the GPP Strategy and Action Plan, was expected to finalized in Q1 of 2025.</p>	

<b>5.9. Are there sustainability requirements or guidelines for events hosted at the institution?</b>	
Every event hosted at the institution <b>must</b> abide by sustainability criteria. (2 points)	
The institution <b>strongly recommends or incentives</b> sustainability measures, but they are <b>not required</b> . (1 point)	
There are <b>no</b> sustainability guidelines for institution events. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	1
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  According to the <a href="#">Climate Action Roadmap 2024 Update</a>, there are action points noting that all new contract arrangements related to food services, including events and conferences, have to include measures targeted at addressing food waste. Additionally, there is a requirement aimed at progressively eliminating single use items from events as well.</p>	

<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
<p><i>Score explanation:</i>  <i>Some Labs at the University of Limerick (ex. Bernal Bio Laboratories; the Department of Chemical Sciences) have received, or are in the process of pursuing <a href="#">Green Lab Certification</a>. The Green Lab Certification program educates laboratory staff on laboratory sustainability topics like energy, water, waste, and chemistry/materials. Green Lab Certification is further recognized by the United Nations Race to Zero campaign as a key measure of progress towards a zero carbon future, and is considered the gold standard for laboratory sustainability best practices around the world. Green Lab certification has been awarded to Clinical Skills labs at the University of Limerick School of Medicine where power saving and consumable waste production have been optimized.</i></p>	

5.11. Does your <u>institution's</u> endowment portfolio investments include fossil-fuel companies?	
The institution is <b>entirely divested</b> from fossil fuels <b>and</b> has made a <b>commitment to reinvest divested funds</b> into renewable energy companies or renewable energy campus initiatives. (4 points)	
The institution is <b>entirely divested</b> from fossil fuels. (3 points)	
The institution has <b>partially divested</b> from fossil fuel companies <b>or</b> has made a <b>commitment to fully divest</b> , but <b>currently</b> still has fossil fuel investments. (2 points)	
The institution has <b>not divested</b> from fossil-fuel companies, but faculty and/or students are <b>conducting organised advocacy</b> for divestment. (1 point)	
Yes, the institution has investments with fossil-fuel companies and there have been <b>no efforts</b> to change that. (0 points)	
Score Assigned:	3
<p><i>Score explanation: The University of Limerick recently withdrew all investment activity in September, 2024. The University currently states that it does not have investments in any carbon-intensive industries. However, information on investment practices prior to September, 2024 is not available.</i></p>	

<b>Section Total (21 out of 32)</b>	<b>65.63%</b>
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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 Limerick School of Medicine.

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

Section	Raw Score %	Letter Grade
<b>Planetary Health Curriculum (30%)</b>	$(44/75) \times 100 = 58.67\%$	C+
<b>Interdisciplinary Research (17.5%)</b>	$(14/17) \times 100 = 82.35\%$	A-
<b>Community Outreach and Advocacy (17.5%)</b>	$(5/14) \times 100 = 35.71\%$	D+
<b>Support for Student-led Planetary Health Initiatives (17.5%)</b>	$(9/15) \times 100 = 60.00\%$	B-
<b>Campus Sustainability (17.5%)</b>	$(21/32) \times 100 = 65.63\%$	B
<b>Institutional Grade</b>	$(.5867 \times 0.3 + .8235 \times 0.175 + .3571 \times 0.175 + .6 \times 0.175 + .6563 \times 0.175) = 60.27\%$	B-

# Report Card Trends

## Section Overview

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

