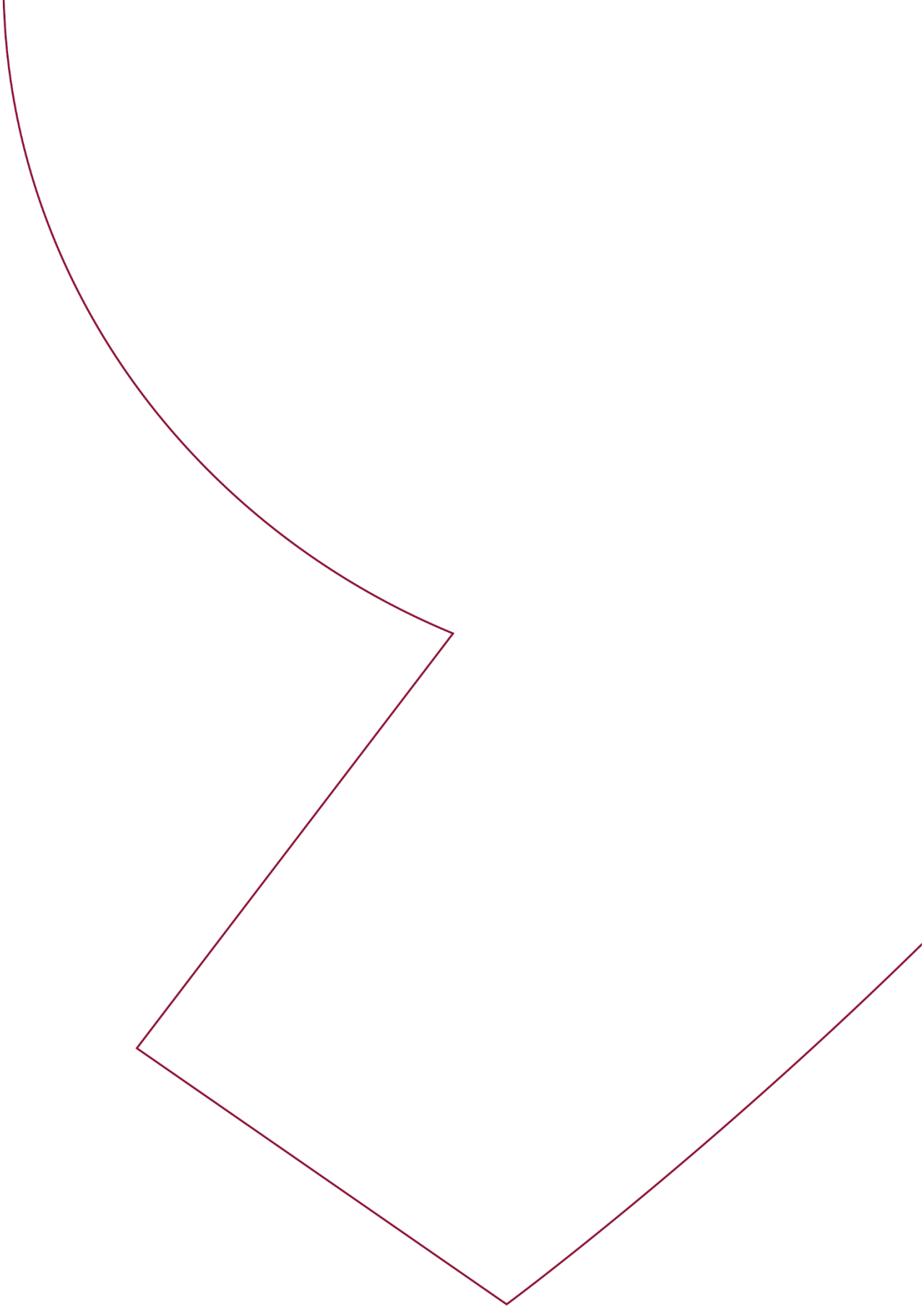


**ASSESSMENT GUIDE FOR
INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION OF
SUSTAINABLE HIGHER EDUCATION**

APRIL 2025



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ASSESSMENT GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION OF SUSTAINABLE HIGHER EDUCATION

April 2025

Hobéon Certification & Accreditation B.V.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) are seventeen global goals for sustainable development that aim to make the world a better place by 2030. The SDGs were agreed upon by countries affiliated with the United Nations (UN), including the Netherlands. They serve as a global compass for challenges such as poverty, education, and the climate crisis.

Currently, the SDG agenda is the leading framework for addressing sustainable development challenges at all levels worldwide. While other frameworks are possible, they must be positioned within the context of the SDGs. The advantage of the SDG framework is not only its widespread adoption by many organizations but also the global research conducted based on this agenda, which allows for the definition of both societal and didactic growth scenarios.

To assess the level of integration of the Sustainable Development Goals in higher education programs, Hobéon utilizes the SHE assessment framework 2025 (hereafter referred to as the SHE framework). SHE stands for Sustainability in Higher Education and replaces the former Audit Instrument Sustainability in Higher Education framework 2016 as of January 1, 2021.



Figure 1. Tulder, R. van (2018), *Business & The Sustainable Development Goals: A Framework for Effective Corporate Involvement*, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, Rotterdam.

Why use the SHE framework as an assessment framework?

The general perspective on societal values can change, and the arrival of the Sustainable Development Goals has led to such a change in the context of sustainable development. The SDGs aim for a balance between social, ecological, and economic interests. This calls for an up-to-date assessment instrument that incorporates the perspective of the SDGs in higher education.

Who is it for?

The SHE assessment framework is designed for programs that aim to incorporate sustainability through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in line with the domain and/or field they prepare students for. SHE is mainly relevant for institutions that want to excel and distinguish themselves in the field of sustainability.

What developments underlie the SDGs?

In shaping the framework, Hobéon relies on the principles set by the United Nations in collaboration with governments, citizens, businesses, and civil society organizations. Since its establishment in 1945, the UN has formulated development objectives that represent universal values. These development goals transformed into the 8 Millennium Development Goals around 2000 and later into the 17 SDGs after 2015. The SDG's aim, among other things, to achieve by 2030:

1. the eradication of poverty and inequality,
2. combating climate change to establish a circular economy and social justice within the planet's ecological boundaries¹.

¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

The SDGs advocate for a holistic approach to understand and address problems. They are transformational, universal, integrated, interconnected, and rights-based. They aim to ensure that actors (enterprises, citizens, governments, and knowledge institutions) in all countries take responsibility to solve global issues, leaving no one behind. The SDGs strive for:

1. social inclusion (PEOPLE);
2. environmental protection (PLANET);
3. enduring and inclusive economic growth (PROSPERITY);
4. peace (PEACE);
5. partnership through collaboration among civil society organizations such as businesses, education, and NGOs (PARTNERSHIP).

Many companies, higher education institutions and other organizations have already signed a form of SDG Charter. The SDGs and the Dutch SDG Charter aim to:

- Recognize the planet as a whole; everything is interconnected.
- Invest in lifelong learning/development to bring about change.
- Find partners to work together to create a better world.
- Ask the right questions to obtain the right answers.
- Take responsibility to ensure no one is left behind.

Principles for SDGs in Education

Within the frameworks of People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership, educational programs can choose their own position and define their contribution. It is assumed that the position and choices of the program are well-founded. The choices made by a program within the frameworks of People, Planet, Prosperity, Partnership, Peace, and SDGs, the extent to which external partners are involved, and the intensity of this participation/influence of external partners are topics that are part of this foundation. When educating future professionals for sustainability, there are several general principles that apply, regardless of the choice of one or more (combinations of) SDGs:

- Transfer and development of knowledge about sustainability in relation to the domain, based on the principles and goals of one or more SDGs.
- Actively seeking the interconnections (nexus) between the SDGs.
- Developing a pragmatic, solution-oriented attitude towards the SDGs, rather than an ideological one.
- Developing a sense of responsibility, integrity, respect, and personal and societal leadership.
- Organizational development: transition and change management focused on stakeholder dialogues and co-creation models.
- Developing behaviors and skills. Examples include interdisciplinary collaboration, engaging in ethical debates, systems thinking, developing future scenarios, or conducting stakeholder analyses. SHE aligns with the objectives set by UNESCO in the document "Education for Sustainable Development Goals."
- Developing social intelligence in addition to other forms of intelligence: IQ (general intelligence), EQ (emotional intelligence), and PQ (practical intelligence).
- Multiple value creation: Developing a focus on creating multiple values related to People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships.

Education encourages thinking in terms of transition, transformative change, and also embraces ambitions focused on "doing good" rather than just "avoiding harm."

This assessment guide covers the following topics:

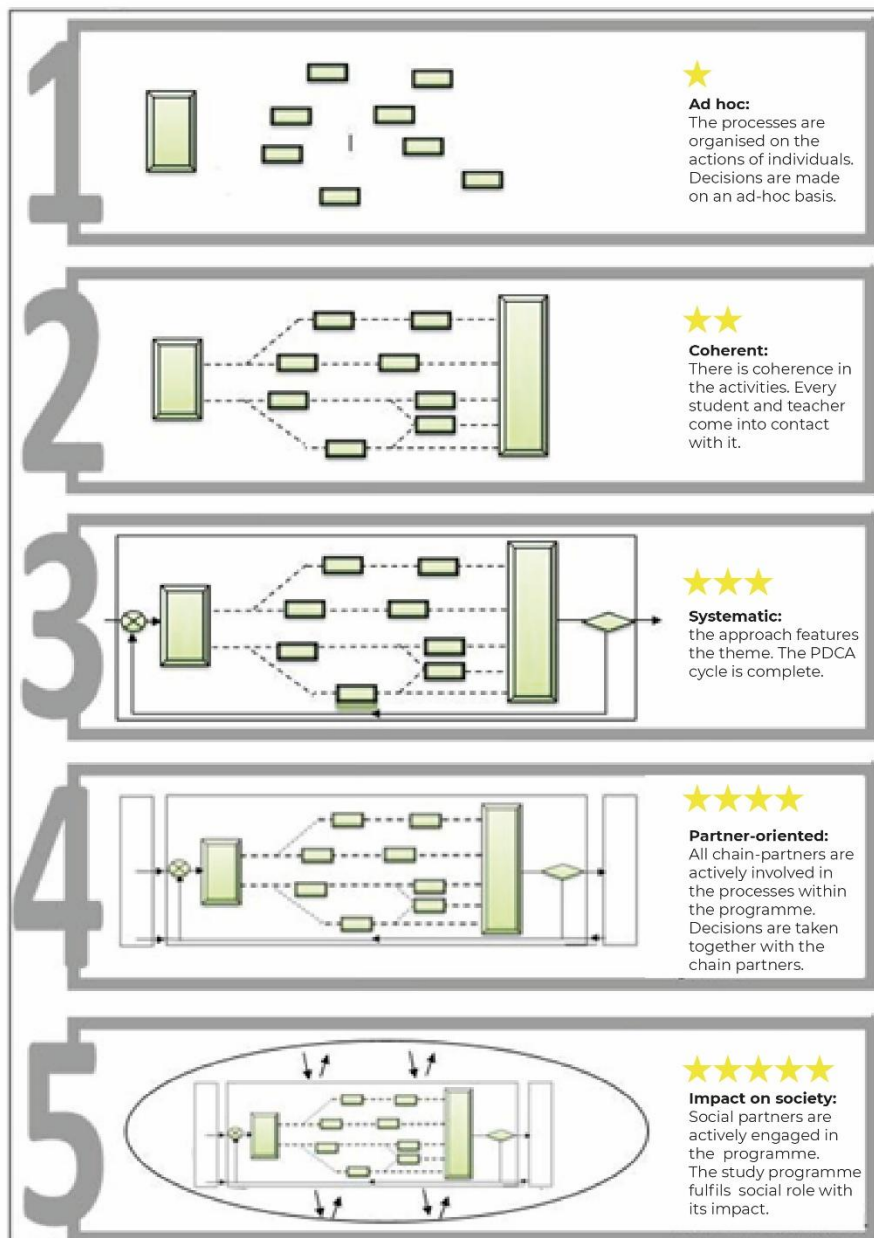
- The assessment framework;
- Assessment process;
- Decision rules to be applied;
- Certification decision;
- Certificate issuance, management, and validity period;
- Procedure for recertification;

2 THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SHE distinguishes five development levels in the degree of integration of the concept of sustainability and the SDGs in educational programs. These levels are derived from the original EFQM model (1988)² and the INK model³ as it was until 2008. Although the INK Foundation has since abandoned this model in favor of "perspectives," it fits well within the SHE framework to assess the rapid developments taking place in educational programs in this field, identify the level of development, and encourage further progress.

Prior to specifying the individual criteria for the different levels, a general characterization of these levels is provided. The general formulation and specific elaboration should be seen in conjunction with each other. They can complement each other, and together they acquire a meaning that challenges programs to seek the spirit of the criteria rather than adhering strictly to the letter. It is up to the educational programs and SHE auditors to use them in this sense.

The levels range from "ad hoc" to "coherent," "systematic," "partner-oriented," and finally, "impact on society." Here is a description of the five levels.



² <https://efqm.org/>

³ A management model for the integral evaluation, development and management of organizations.

General characterisation of the levels

Level 1 Ad hoc	Activities around the SDGs take place ad hoc: these are based on actions of individuals, and these are one-off activities.
Level 2: Coherent	Activities around the SDGs form a planned, coherent whole. The activities are regarded as common practice: every student and every teacher pay attention to the SDGs in the training (plan + do of the PDCA cycle).
Level 3: Systematic	The theme of 'sustainability' is systematically anchored in the training. The PDCA cycle is demonstrably round: the programme evaluates, initiates follow-up activities, and achieves concrete results (check + act of the PDCA cycle).
Level 4: Partner-oriented	Crucial professional field partners and knowledge institutions work together and are actively involved in the integration and evaluation of 'sustainability' into the training, in other words, throughout the PDCA cycle.
Level 5: Impact on society	The programme profiles itself on the SDGs and the associated social issues, its ambitions in this area reach across borders ⁴ , and crucial partners recognise that the programme fulfils an exemplary role in both areas. Together with crucial partners, the training has an impact on the sustainability problems facing society.

The study programmes to be assessed are divided into **four main subjects**, each consisting of several sub-topics:

1. Goals

- 1.1. Vision
- 1.2. Strategy
- 1.3. Learning objectives

2. Staff and organization

- 2.1. Faculty
- 2.2. Partnerships
- 2.3. Culture of peace, security, justice
- 2.4. Communication and knowledge-sharing

3. Education and research

- 3.1. Didactics
- 3.2. Knowledge substance of the curriculum
- 3.3. Research and/or professional practice
 - 3.3a. Learning and research in the professional field (Universities of Applied Sciences/hbo)
 - 3.3b. Learning to research (Scientific Universities/wo)

4. Impact

- 4.1. Graduates/alumni
- 4.2. Innovations and impact

These subjects and sub-topics form the framework for assessing the study programmes.

⁴ By across the border we mean within Europe and across the boundaries of educational disciplines.

1. Goals

1.1 Vision

How does the programme relate to the SDGs in its vision of sustainability?

Level 1 Ad hoc	Individual actors within the programme have different and implicit views on sustainability, which may or may not be related to the SDG.
Level 2: Coherent	The programme features an explicitly stated vision on sustainability and education using (1) the vision on the SDGs, (2) the SDG Charter, (3) the SPs. The vision is supported by large parts of the programme.
Level 3: Systematic	The programme has elaborated the explicit vision with a substantiated choice for one, more or all of the 17 SDGs. The vision is systematically and demonstrably kept up to date. The entire programme propagates the vision and trains students to become SDG competent professionals.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	Crucial work field partners and knowledge institutions are active partners in the systematic development of a vision on sustainability and in its regular updating.
Level 5: Impact on society	The programme profiles itself with its vision based on the SDGs, and the ground-breaking ambitions that express this. Crucial partners recognise the programme as an example in both areas. The developed and propagated vision leads has a demonstrable impact on society.

1.2 Strategy

How does the programme incorporate its vision of sustainability according to the SDGs in its strategy?

Level 1 Ad hoc	Individual actors within the programme formulate their own strategy and goals for their activities based on one or more SDGs.
Level 2: Coherent	The programme has translated the explicit vision of sustainability into joint concrete goals for all actors. These concrete goals cover the various policy areas.
Level 3: Systematic	The programme annually evaluates the achievement of the SDGs pursued and ensures that students are competent in the SDG. The programme formulates a new strategy where necessary. The programme applies the explicit vision of sustainability in this regard.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	Crucial work field partners and knowledge institutions are active partners in the strategy development based on the targeted SDGs and their annual updating.
Level 5: Impact on society	The programme profiles itself with its strategy, which is derived from the vision of the SDGs. Critical partners recognize the training strategy as an exemplary and resourceful translation of the SDGs. The training strategy is adopted and applied by other organisations and companies.

1.3 Learning objectives

How do the learning goals of the programme reflect the SDGs and objectives of UNESCO?

Level 1 Ad hoc	None or some of the learning objectives of the programme coincidentally contain elements that can be linked to the SDGs and the objectives of UNESCO.
Level 2: Coherent	The SDGs and the objectives of UNESCO have been explicitly and deliberately incorporated into parts of the learning objectives or the elaboration thereof.
Level 3: Systematic	The SDGs and the objectives of UNESCO are an integral part of the learning objectives. The programme regularly evaluates and updates these in conjunction with the vision on sustainability.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	Crucial work field partners and knowledge institutions are active partners in the integration of the SDGs and the objectives of UNESCO into the learning objectives and the regular updating of the learning outcomes based on this.
Level 5: Impact on society	The programme fulfils a leading role nationally (or even internationally) in the further development of the learning objectives based on the SDGs and the objectives of UNESCO, and the ground-breaking ambitions that express this. Crucial partners from the professional field and knowledge institutions acknowledge the programme as an example in this respect. Other study programmes adopt these learning objectives.

2. Faculty and organisation

2.1. Staff

Level 1 Ad hoc	A number of faculty members have substantive knowledge in the field of SDGs. The faculty offers scope for the execution of individual training initiatives in the field of sustainability.
Level 2: Coherent	All faculty members work on their expertise development with regard to the SDGs that are an extension of the domain of the training programme. The development of expertise in the field of sustainability is part of the personnel development plan.
Level 3: Systematic	The programme regularly evaluates the level of expertise of its employees about the SDGs and, where necessary, formulates new professionalisation actions. Evaluation and reflection take place in conjunction with the goals of the personnel development plan.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	Crucial professional field partners and knowledge institutions are active partners in the expertise development of faculty members with regard to the SDGs: they work together with the training on the expertise development of the faculty members.
Level 5: Impact on society	Lecturers of the programme are even acknowledged across the border as pioneers and leaders when it comes to their expertise on the SDGs in relation to the professional domain. Together with the key-partners, the faculty members of the programme have an impact on society.

2.2 Partnerships

Level 1 Ad hoc	Individual employees have ad hoc contact with the professional field and / or knowledge institutions about their own objectives derived from the SDGs.
Level 2: Coherent	The programme plans and organises its contacts with companies and knowledge institutions with attention to the objectives derived from the SDGs.
Level 3: Systematic	The programme regularly evaluates its database of partners and forms of partnerships in relation to the SDGs. The programme consciously develops its network on the basis of the desired exchange of knowledge and expertise about sustainability / SDGs and training them accordingly.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	The programme has managed to engage crucial professional field partners and knowledge institutions. Crucial work field partners and knowledge institutions are actively collaborating with the study programme on the realisation of the SDGs.
Level 5: Impact on society	With its partners the programme forms a leading coalition in the field of the SDGs; this pioneering role is acknowledged even across the border. In the field of SDGs, the leading coalition has demonstrable impact on society.

2.3 Culture of peace, inclusiveness, security and justice

Level 1 Ad hoc	Individuals take actions - often one-off - to create a culture of peacefulness, inclusion, security and justice in education.
Level 2: Coherent	The programme has a coherent policy aimed at developing common values and appropriate behaviour around peacefulness, inclusivity, security and justice among students and teachers. These values are supported by them.
Level 3: Systematic	The programme evaluates its own culture: to what extent are the common values of peacefulness, inclusivity, security and justice reflected in our culture? Based on the evaluation results, the programme takes follow-up actions to strengthen common values and promote appropriate behaviour.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	The programme also develops common values around peacefulness, inclusivity, security and justice with key professional field partners and knowledge institutions. The common values and appropriate behaviour are propagated together with them.
Level 5: Impact on society	The programme fulfils a recognised social role and sets an inspiring example for others. The developed and propagated common values of peace, inclusiveness, security and justice are adopted by other parties in society.

2.4 Communication and knowledge-sharing

How does the programme share knowledge, and how does it communicate about topics, questions and activities related to the SDGs (internally and externally)?

Level 1 Ad hoc	Communication and knowledge sharing about one or more SDGs takes place incidentally, ad hoc through actions of individuals.
Level 2: Coherent	The programme has an explicit communication and knowledge-sharing policy about its own activities related to the SDGs. Communication and knowledge sharing about these activities related to the SDGs is executed in a systematic manner.
Level 3: Systematic	The programme evaluates the progress of the goals in the communication and knowledge-sharing policy specifically aimed at the activities related to the SDGs. Based on the evaluation outcomes, the programme will take follow-up actions to promote communication and knowledge sharing about SDGs.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	Crucial professional field parties and knowledge institutions are active partners in the communication and knowledge sharing of the study programme about the SDGs.
Level 5: Impact on society	The training programme is acknowledged across the border as the leading communication and knowledge sharing platform in the field of SDGs with demonstrable impact.

3. Education and research

3.1 Didactics

Level 1 Ad hoc	In education, didactic work forms are occasionally used, depending on individual lecturers, that promote knowledge and attitude of responsibility for one or more SDGs among students.
Level 2: Coherent	During the course, every student comes into contact with working methods that are purposefully used to develop knowledge and an attitude of responsibility for one or more SDGs.
Level 3: Systematic	The study programme evaluates whether it develops an attitude of responsibility around the SDGs with its didactic concept. Based on the evaluation, the programme takes follow-up actions to adapt its didactic concept.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	Pivotal work field partners and knowledge institutions are active partners in the systematic didactics' development and implementation. They are actively involved in the evaluation of the didactic concept.
Level 5: Impact on society	The programme is acknowledged across the border for its innovative didactic concept and working methods in the field of SDGs. Other organisations and companies are adopting the didactic concept in the field of SDGs.

3.2 Knowledge content educational programme

Level 1 Ad hoc	Individual lecturers or students - often incidentally - establish a link with the SDGs in education. The knowledge content of the training happens to contain elements that can be linked to the SDGs and objectives of UNESCO.
Level 2: Coherent	Basic knowledge of the SDGs relevant to the educational domain has a visible place in the curriculum. The SDGs and the objectives of UNESCO have been explicitly and consciously made part of the knowledge content of the curriculum.
Level 3: Systematic	The SDGs and the objectives of UNESCO are an integral part of the education programme. The programme regularly evaluates and updates the curriculum in conjunction with the vision on sustainability.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	Crucial work field partners and knowledge institutions are active partners in the integration of the SDGs and the objectives of UNESCO in the education programme. They are actively involved in the evaluation of the curriculum.
Level 5: Impact on society	The programme is acknowledged across the border for its innovative education programme in the field of SDGs. Other organisations and companies are adopting parts of the innovative education programme in the field of SDGs.

3.3a Learn and research in the professional field

Level 1 Ad hoc	Individual teachers or students occasionally take the perspective of the SDGs in research and / or practical assignments in the professional field.
Level 2: Coherent	During the study programme, each student carries out a research or practical assignment in the field from the perspective of the SDGs at least once.
Level 3: Systematic	The programme regularly evaluates with external supervisors whether students use the perspective on SDGs when carrying out research or practical assignments in the professional field. It follows up on the results of the evaluation.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	Crucial work field partners and knowledge institutions are involved in the choices about the practical / research projects to be carried out that are aimed at innovations around the SDGs in professional practice. Which assignments are carried out, and how are assignments set up (development side)?
Level 5: Impact on society	The programme is acknowledged across the border for its innovative research and / or practical assignments in the field of SDGs. The approach and development side of the innovative research and / or practical assignments in the field of SDGs are adopted by other organisations and companies and has an impact on increasing sustainability in society.

3.3b Learn how to research

Level 1 Ad hoc	Individual lecturers or students occasionally take the perspective of the SDGs in research assignments.
Level 2: Coherent	Each student carries out a research assignment at least once during the programme from the perspective of the SDGs.
Level 3: Systematic	The programme regularly evaluates with external supervisors whether students use the perspective on sustainability / SDGs when carrying out research assignments. The programme follows up on the results of the evaluations.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	Crucial work field partners and knowledge institutions are involved in the choices about the research projects to be carried out that are aimed at innovations around the SDGs in the research domain. Which assignments are carried out, and how are assignments set up (development side)?
Level 5: Impact on society	The programme is acknowledged across the border for its innovative research assignments in the field of SDGs. The approach and development side of the innovative research and / or practical assignments in the field of SDGs are adopted by other organisations and companies and has an impact on increasing sustainability in society.

4. Impact

4.1 Graduates/alumni

Level 1 Ad hoc	Individual graduates are able to make an incidental contribution to the SDGs in the professional field or research domain.
Level 2: Coherent	All graduates are able to make a substantiated contribution to the SDGs in the professional field or research domain.
Level 3: Systematic	Regular evaluation shows that all graduates are able to clarify the meaning of the SDGs and initiate changes in their professional practice or research domain. The training follows up on the results of these evaluations.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	Crucial work field partners and knowledge institutions recognise that all graduates are competent to act as ambassadors with regard to the SDGs in the work field or research domain. The programme makes this demonstrable through regular evaluation with professional field partners and knowledge institutions.
Level 5: Impact on society	The graduates / alumni fulfil an exemplary role, across the border, in making professional practice more sustainable on the basis of the SDGs. Work field partners and knowledge institutions endorse their track record and graduates are experienced as thought leaders in the field of sustainability and have an impact on society.

4.2 Innovations and impact

Level 1 Ad hoc	Individual research and / or graduation projects occasionally lead to solutions for issues related to the SDGs.
Level 2: Coherent	All students, lecturers and researchers are able to come up with innovative solutions in education, research or professional practice for issues related to the SDGs.
Level 3: Systematic	The programme regularly evaluates the impact of the innovations that students, lecturers and researchers develop around the SDGs. The training follows up on the results of these evaluations.
Level 4: Partner-oriented	Crucial work field partners and knowledge institutions recognise that all students, lecturers and researchers are innovators in the field of the SDGs in education, research or professional practice.
Level 5: Impact on society	The programme has an impact on research, education or professional practice with its innovations in the field of the SDGs; this is acknowledged across the border. Pivotal work field partners and knowledge institutions endorse the track record and the impact of the programme in this area.

3. PROCEDURE OF THE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Intake

If an higher education institute wants to obtain a Sustainable Higher Education certification, it contacts Hobéon for an intake interview. In this intake interview, Hobéon and the applicant agree on which study programme(s) the audit relates to and what level of certification the study programme aspires to. In an audit where several courses are assessed at the same time, a working method is agreed that enables an assessment for all courses in an appropriate manner. Agreements are also made about the audit programme, preparation, division of tasks, planning, etc. Hobéon then draws up a quotation for the performance of one or more SHE audits, in line with the agreements made in the intake interview.

3.2 The audit team

The audit team is composed of two auditors. The auditors are qualified for conducting audits and are experts in the field of sustainability and quality assurance in higher education. At least one of the auditors is a certified Lead auditor. Hobéon submits the composition of the audit team to the study programme(s). The auditors are independent of the study programme(s) and competent in the areas of quality assurance, auditing, educational quality and sustainable development.

3.3 The audit

Content and process quality

The assessment concerns the degree of integration of sustainable development in the content and design of the study programme and the extent to which the conditions for achieving this are present. It is therefore a combination of a substantive assessment and an assessment of the processes by which that content is created and safeguarded. The assessment of both content and process quality, as two sides of the same coin, is a hallmark of Hobéon as a certification body.

Dimensions and demonstrability

The scale of the audits is appropriate to the scale of the audits that assess the integral educational quality. The SHE audits assume the presence of an overall level of quality in the educational processes and build on it. In the documentation that the programme submits for assessment and in the audit process itself, it concerns the focus on sustainable development within the existing situation. The programme provides a self-reflection with supporting documents, and the panel verifies the status of the programme in terms of sustainability on the basis of audit interviews with various stakeholders. The self-reflection follows the structure of the criteria as they are mentioned in this assessment guide. Hobéon uses demonstrability, conviction and plausibility as important starting points for the SHE assessment; a sensible combination of information sources is important for this.

Focused on improvement

The envisaged added value of involving Hobéon as an external assessor is to increase the civil effect of integrating sustainable development into the study programme, but certainly also to strengthen its own quality cycle. This means that not only can there be a balanced assessment, but that it also provides an incentive for improvement. This can be achieved by the methods of working and collaborating, characterised as development-oriented auditing, as well as by the assessment framework – that features 'growth' as an element of its design – and the applied decision rules.

Audit process

The assessment takes place in two phases, the first being a document study, the second an site visit. The self-reflection is the basic document for the assessment. In this self-reflection reference is made to the accompanying documentation. The documentation consists as much as possible of authentic sources, i.e. documents that the study programme already draws up to record and communicate about its sustainability policy. The audit programme is determined by the audit team after consultation with the institution.

The audit team bases its questions on the self-reflection and the assessment framework and draws up its audit strategy on the basis of the preliminary findings. During the audit, the auditors will in any

case hold discussions with management, teaching staff, lecturers, students and the professional field / partners. Attention is paid to a spread of: specialisations, disciplines, phases in the curriculum, knowledge and experience with regard to sustainable development, etc. If more than one programme is assessed, the discussion panels consist of sufficient representatives from all programmes.

At the end of the audit, the audit team provides preliminary feedback. If necessary, it provides instructions for correcting minor shortcomings (see decision rules). The audit team then prepares the report.

3.4 Report

The audit team draws up a report with the main findings from the audit. The report contains the most important considerations that lead to the judgments on the individual sub-topics and subjects. This results in an integral final judgment on the level of development that the programme has reached in the field of sustainability. Before adopting the report, the audit team submits it to the institution to correct factual inaccuracies and a university statement. After processing the response from the institution, the audit team adopts the report.

The report also contains a section with recommendations. The programme can use this recommendations as a development agenda for the next steps. When recertified, the recommendations are included in the assessment process.

3.5 Midterm interview

Halfway through the validity period of the certificate, a mid-term interview will take place. The interview is a prerequisite for continuing the certification. In the mid-term interview, the developments of the programme in relation to the SHE certification are discussed. The audit team speaks with the management and possible other relevant stakeholders. The institution may propose specific agenda items for the interview. The institution is responsible for reporting on the interview. The report of the interview is part of continuing the certification and possible recertification.

4. DECISION RULES

The following decision rules apply to a judgment on the level of the certification:

- The four main topics must on average be 'compliant' to the intended development levels;
- For the two main topics Goals and Impact, each sub-topic must be at least 'compliant' in order to be rated as 'compliant' in its entirety;
- For the two main subjects Faculty and Organisation and Education and Research, one sub-subject may be below the standard; not being (2.1) Staff, (3.2) Knowledge content of the curriculum and (3.3a) Learning and researching in the professional field and / or (3.3b) Learning to research

If, despite this non-conformance, the audit team finds it 'compliant' at subject level, it must give an explicit consideration.

4.1 Recovery period when non-compliant

If the audit team rates one or two main subjects as 'non-compliant', there is a possibility for a recovery period. The programme must then demonstrably have started an improvement process within six months in order to still be able to obtain a positive assessment for those subjects. If this is not successful, the decision to certify will follow at a lower than the intended level. In the event of a new trajectory, all main subjects will be reassessed, if this takes place within a year, this may be done with substantiated results of the previous research.

4.2 Minor shortcomings

If the audit shows that a study programme, or one of the study programmes, does not fully meet the requirements of the criteria at a certain level, but deviates only slightly from it, the audit team can, at the request of the study programme, grant an adjustment period. The training programme will have an extra six weeks to carry out this repair. When assessing the results, the audit team determines whether the sub-topic in question now meets the requirements.

If, in the opinion of the audit team, a minor repair is sufficient to arrive at a 'satisfactory' assessment at subject level, this can still be included as part of the audit and processed in the report, whereby this must be visible and substantiated in the report.

5 CERTIFICATION DECISION AND CERTIFICATE

The report is sent by the audit team to the certification coordinator (certification authority) with an motivation for the SHE certification of the programme. The certification coordinator assesses the application on the basis of this motivation, performs a marginal assessment and takes a certification decision. The certification decision and the Sustainable Higher Education certificate are sent to the relevant study programme(s). Hobéon ensures that the awarded certificate is entered in the international SHE Register. Hobéon keeps a register of the programmes that have been awarded the Sustainable Higher Education Certification and at what level. This register is publicly accessible through the Hobéon website.

The validity period of the certificate depends on the regulations on accreditation in the country of the institution in question. If desired, the period of validity is the same as the regular period of national accreditation, if this is not desirable, a period of validity of five years applies. When the period of validity expires, the programme can choose to go for recertification. The programme can choose from: (1) a recertification at the same development level, and (2) a new certification at a higher level.

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