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The journey of curricular sustainability at Hasselt University

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Abstract: 200 to 300 words

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This contribution outlines the ongoing journey of Hasselt University towards integrating sustainability competencies into all curricula. It highlights the pivotal steps taken, challenges faced and achievements made thus far.

To guarantee a bottom-up approach, diverse stakeholders were consulted and a dedicated task force, comprising colleagues from the faculties and the Educational Policy Directorate, was established.

Drawing from the scientific literature on sustainability competencies (Wiek et al, 2015; Ploum et al, 2018; Bianchi et al, 2022) and aligning them with employability skills, a comprehensive sustainability framework was developed, consisting of four competences:

- Inclusive collaboration
- Systems thinking
- Ethical and sustainable reflection
- Sustainable action

To increase the support for this framework, two aspects were crucial in the implementation process: (1) each educational program has the freedom to contextualize the sustainability competences to their specific needs, and (2) the sustainability competences are merged with the existing framework of employability skills to acknowledge the efforts of the past.

Various supportive measures for the implementation are introduced:

- Courses for professionalization of the teaching staff
- Toolbox with information about:
 - The theme of sustainability at Hasselt University
 - The Hasselt University competence framework, examples of partial competencies, working and teaching methods and evaluation
- Tailored sessions for Educational Management Teams and faculties

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- Educational support by the Education Policy and Quality Assurance directorate
- Monitoring progress via periodic dialogues in the context of quality assurance

Different faculties handle the implementation differently. The Faculty of Architecture & Arts showcases proactive initiatives for integrating sustainability views and competencies in the curriculum. In the Faculty of Sciences, a new master's program in materiomics responds to sustainability challenges, in that they aim to educate students to develop sustainable and innovative materials. Societal sustainability challenges and sustainability competences are explicitly integrated into the master's program.

References

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