



Methodical and professional cooperation by:

econcept

Research / Consulting / Evaluation

A large, diverse group of students, mostly young adults, are seated in a lecture hall. They are looking towards the front of the room, where a presentation is likely taking place. The students are dressed in casual attire, and the atmosphere appears to be one of focused attention.

Embedding Sustainability into Economics and Business Education

An Assessment of Curricula and Strategies at Swiss Universities 2024

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Study programmes included

University & department	Name of study program	Page
Universität St. Gallen, School of Management	BA in Betriebswirtschaftslehre	52
Berner Fachhochschule (BFH), Departement Wirtschaft	BSc in Betriebsökonomie	53
Berner Fachhochschule (BFH), Departement Wirtschaft	BSc in International Business Administration	53
FFHS - Fernfachhochschule Schweiz, Dapartement Wirtschaft und Technik	BSc in Betriebsökonomie	54
FHNW, Hochschule für Wirtschaft	BSc in Betriebsökonomie	54
FHNW, Hochschule für Wirtschaft	BSc in Business Administration (International Management)	55
FHNW, Hochschule für Wirtschaft	BSc in International Business Management (trinational)	55
HES-SO, Domaine Economie et Services	BSc en Economie d'entreprise /in Betriebsökonomie	56
HES-SO, Domaine Economie et Services	BSc in International Business Management	56
Hochschule Luzern (HSLU), Departement Wirtschaft	BSc in Betriebsökonomie	57
Hochschule Luzern (HSLU), Departement Wirtschaft	BSc in Business Psychology	57
Hochschule Luzern (HSLU), Departement Wirtschaft	BSc in International Business Administration	58
Hochschule Luzern (HSLU), Departement Wirtschaft	BSc in International Sustainable Tourism	58
OST - Ostschweizer Fachhochschule, Fachbereich Wirtschaft	BSc in Betriebsökonomie	59
SUPSI, Departement of Business Economics, Health and Social Care	BSc in Leisure Management	59
ZHAW, School of Management and Law	BSc in Betriebsökonomie	60
ZHAW, School of Management and Law	BSc International Management	60
Università della Svizzera italiana (USI), Facoltà di scienze economiche	MSc in Corporate Communication	61
Università della Svizzera italiana (USI), Facoltà di scienze economiche	MSc in Marketing and Transformative Economy	61
Universität Basel, Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät	MSc in Business and Technology	62
Universität Bern, Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät	MA in Business and Law	62
Universität Bern, Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät	MSc in Betriebswirtschaftslehre	63
Universität St. Gallen, School of Management	MA in Accounting and Corporate Finance	63
Universität St. Gallen, School of Management	MA in Management, Organisation und Kultur	64
Universität St. Gallen, School of Management	MA in Marketing Management	64
Universität St. Gallen, School of Management	MA in Strategy and International Management	65
Université de Fribourg, Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät	MA in Betriebswirtschaftslehre	65
Université de Fribourg, Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät	MA in in Marketing	66

Universität de Fribourg, Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät	MA in International and European Business	66
Universität de Neuchâtel, Faculté des sciences économiques	MSc en innovation	67
Berner Fachhochschule (BFH), Departement Wirtschaft	MSc in Business Administration	67
Berner Fachhochschule (BFH), Departement Wirtschaft	MSc in Digital Business Administration	68
FFHS - Fernfachhochschule Schweiz, Dapartement Wirtschaft und Technik	MSc in Betriebsökonomie in Sustainability and Circular Innovation	69
FHNW, Hochschule für Wirtschaft	MSc in Sustainable Business Development (trinational)	69
HES-SO, Domaine Economie et Services	MSc in Business Administration	70
Hochschule Luzern (HSLU), Departement Wirtschaft	MSc in Business Administration	70
Hochschule Luzern (HSLU), Departement Wirtschaft	MSc in Logistik und Supply Chain Management	71
OST - Ostschweizer Fachhochschule, Fachbereich Wirtschaft	Master Business Administration	71
SUPSI, Departement of Business Economics, Health and Social Care	MSc in Business Administration	72
ZHAW, School of Management and Law	MSc in Accounting and Controlling	72
ZHAW, School of Management and Law	MSc in Business Administration - Major Health Economics and Healthcare Management	73
ZHAW, School of Management and Law	MSc in Business Administration - Major Innovation and Entrepreneurship	73
ZHAW, School of Management and Law	MSc in Business Administration - Major Marketing	74
ZHAW, School of Management and Law	MSc in Business Administration - Major Unternehmensentwicklung	74
ZHAW, School of Management and Law	MSc in Circular Economy Management	75
ZHAW, School of Management and Law	MSc in International Business	75
ZHAW, School of Management and Law	MSc in Management and Law	76
Universität St. Gallen, School of Economics and Political Science	BA in Volkswirtschaftslehre	77
Universität Zürich, Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät	BA in Volkswirtschaftslehre	77
Università della Svizzera italiana (USI), Facoltà di scienze economiche	MSc in Economia e politiche internazionali	78
Universität Basel & Universität Bern, Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät	MSc in International and Monetary Economics	78
Universität St. Gallen, School of Economics and Political Science	MA in Economics	79
Universität St. Gallen, School of Economics and Political Science	MA in Quantitative Economics and Finance	79
Universität St. Gallen, School of Management	MA in Business Innovation	80
Universität Zürich, Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät	MA in Economics/Volkswirtschaftslehre	80
Université de Fribourg, Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät	MA in Volkswirtschaftslehre	81
Université de Neuchâtel, Faculté des sciences économiques	MSc in Applied Economics	81
Università della Svizzera italiana (USI), Facoltà di scienze economiche	MSc in Finance	82
Universität Basel, Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät	MSc in Finance and Money	82
Universität St. Gallen, School of Finance	MA in Banking and Finance	83
Université de Fribourg, Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät	MA in Accounting and Finance	83
Université de Neuchâtel, Faculté des sciences économiques	MSc in Finance	84

Hochschule Luzern (HSLU), Departement Wirtschaft	MSc in Banking and Finance	84
ZHAW, School of Management and Law	MSc in Banking and Finance	85
Universität Basel, Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät	BA in Business and Economics	86
Universität St. Gallen, School of Economics and Political Science	BA in International Affairs and Governance	86
Université de Neuchâtel, Faculté des sciences économiques	BSc en sciences économiques	87
HES-SO, Domaine Economie et Services	BSc en Tourisme / in Tourismus	88
HES-SO, Domaine Economie et Services	BSc in International Business Management	88
Hochschule Luzern (HSLU), Departement Wirtschaft	BSc in Mobility, Data Science and Economics	89
SUPSI, Departement of Business Economics, Health and Social Care	BSc Economia Aziendale	89
Universität Basel, Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät	MSc in Business and Economics	90
Universität Bern, Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät	MSc in Business and Economics	90
Universität St. Gallen, School of Economics and Political Science	MA in International Affairs and Governance	91
Université de Neuchâtel, Faculté des sciences économiques	MSc en développement international des affaires / MSc in International Business Development	91
Université de Neuchâtel, Faculté des sciences économiques	MSc en innovation	92
Berner Fachhochschule (BFH), Departement Wirtschaft	MSc in Circular Innovation and Sustainability	93
FHNW, Hochschule für Wirtschaft	MSc in International Management	93
Hochschule Luzern (HSLU), Departement Wirtschaft	MSc Applied Information and Data Science	94

Editorial

Skills for business change makers

The urgency of sustainable development is undeniable. In the face of global challenges such as climate change, resource scarcity and environmental pollution, education must reorient itself. In particular, the integration of the circular economy into all courses of study is essential, as our resources are becoming increasingly scarce. Today's students are tomorrow's decision-makers, and their understanding of sustainability will shape the future. It is not enough to treat sustainability as a marginal topic. Rather, relevant content must be deeply embedded in the curricula. Teaching and learning methods should aim to promote practical skills. Only through practical education can students be empowered to develop innovative and sustainable solutions. Universities have an enormous responsibility: they must make sustainability the central pillar of their educational philosophy in order to ensure a future worth living.

Jeannette Morath
Founder & CEO recircle

Redefining Success in Business and Economics Education

Traditional career paths in business and economics often focus on high grades, prestigious internships, and securing top consulting positions. However, this route frequently leads to burnout and disillusionment, with success often being based on conformity rather than innovation.

Over the past years we have witnessed many peers who, despite their academic and professional achievements, find themselves emotionally broken. Their promotions often stem from echoing superiors' desires instead of fostering creativity or responsibility. We need a new economy – and educational institutions play a crucial role in this transformation. Yet many universities reward memorizing and standardized tests, overlooking those who engage in societal issues or work multiple jobs to support themselves.

In today's world, marked by climate change and AI advancements, companies that resist change will become obsolete. The business world needs individuals and teams who challenge norms and innovate. Who have the courage to experiment, try out, fail and iterate.

To deans and educators: rethink curricula and valorize student engagement beyond academics. Make courses on sustainability, social responsibility, and transformative leadership the baseline. Reward student involvement in societal discourse, activism, and entrepreneurial ventures. By redefining criteria for success, we can ensure a future of business that is not just profitable, but also sustainable and inclusive.

Caroline Lemke and Michael Winter
Co-Presidents, oikos International

Management Summary

Universities play a central role in helping to transform our societies and economies to become sustainable. They are education and training institutions for tomorrow's managers and academic specialists, and centres of research and innovation. They provide continuous professional development and are partners to a wide range of stakeholders in the public and private sectors.

Economics and business administration programmes are particularly relevant to this transformation, as they produce a large number of graduates who enter key managerial and professional positions and shape people's understanding of the economy.

With this report, WWF provides an updated overview of the current situation regarding the integration of sustainability topics in economics and business administration at Swiss universities. As in the previous WWF 2020 study, all bachelor's and master's degree programmes at Swiss universities with at least 50% of their content in economic sciences were surveyed.

For the first time, economic sciences faculties/departments at all universities and universities of applied sciences were also included in the survey, in order to identify strategies, goals and measures to promote the integration of sustainable development in the faculty and its study programmes.

Key findings

Invitations to participate in the survey were sent to 27 faculties/departments and 145 programmes: 16 (59%) and 79 (54%) participated in the survey.

Most departments have set strategic goals in the area of sustainability. The existence of measures for their implementation at departmental level, such as guidelines, committees or specific support measures, varies, with universities of applied sciences performing slightly better than universities.

The greatest need for support to better integrate sustainability is seen in the areas of financial resources, exchange of best practice and the promotion of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary skills among lecturers.

Based on the information provided by the programme directors, the analysis shows that, on average, each of the sustainable development themes is moderately or strongly integrated in approximately two-thirds of the programmes, with a slightly higher level of integration at universities than at universities of applied sciences. Comparing compulsory and elective courses, we find a stronger integration of sustainability issues in compulsory courses at universities of applied sciences, while at universities the integration is stronger in elective courses.

In terms of fields of study, sustainability issues are better integrated in business administration and combined programmes than in economics and banking and finance programmes.

In terms of teaching/learning approaches to promote sustainability-related skills, approaches to promote critical and systemic thinking, reflection on values and emotions, and action skills are slightly more common than approaches to promote interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. On average, these approaches are slightly more common in universities than in universities of applied sciences.

In recent years, most departments have started to formulate strategies and objectives for integrating sustainable development into teaching and research. However, activities are still rather limited, focusing mainly on workshops and training for lecturers as well as the provision of materials.

Nevertheless, the study shows that progress has been made: Over the last three years, more sustainable development topics have been integrated into the study programme and, on average, they are dealt with more intensively. In terms of teaching/learning approaches to promote sustainability skills, there has been little development - programmes tend to use more traditional learning approaches.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, and drawing on the international literature on integrating sustainability into teaching and learning, we propose the following recommendations to various stakeholders. For further information and inspiration on how to implement these recommendations, please refer to Part C.

Deans

Strategy: Develop strategic principles and actions in line with the University's sustainability strategy and international sustainability standards or principles - and in terms of a whole institution approach.

Committee: Establish a committee to coordinate the implementation of measures.

Guidelines: Define guidelines for the integration of sustainability-related content in teaching and research and for cooperation with partners in practice.

Incentives: Introduce incentives for programme directors or lecturers to integrate sustainable development issues into teaching and use innovative learning methods.

Faculty promotion: Consider sustainability-related skills in academic recruitment.

Communication: Promote the integration of sustainable development into teaching through motivating, supportive and regular internal communication.

Study program directors

Understanding sustainability: Ensure that all students have a good basic knowledge and understanding of sustainable development through a compulsory course/module.

Topics in compulsory courses: Systematic analysis of the study programme with regard to the sustainable transformation of the economy. Integration of modules/courses on all relevant sustainability topics. This applies in particular to economics as well as banking and finance programmes. Integration of more sustainability topics, especially in compulsory modules. Based on the survey, we recommend the inclusion of the following topics in particular:

Business Administration: Corporate and human rights, sustainable financial management (raising capital and investments), sustainable human resource management and personal development, sustainable consumption.

Economics: Pluralism in economics (schools of thought), equality of opportunity and distribution, sustainable finance, sustainable consumption.

Banking & Finance: Natural resources, global environmental problems and goals, climate change finance, microfinance, sustainability in insurance companies.

Skills: Promoting all categories of sustainability skills, especially transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches and approaches that promote reflection on values and emotions.

Lecturers: Training and coaching to enhance the knowledge of lecturers on sustainable development, to promote interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary competences of lecturers and researchers and to encourage the exchange of best practices.

Lecturers

Topics: Systematic analysis of modules/courses for their sustainability relevance. Integration of all relevant sustainability topics and aspects.

Competences: Promoting all categories of sustainability competences, especially trans- and inter-disciplinary approaches and approaches that promote reflection on values and emotions.

Term papers and theses: Promote sustainability topics for term papers and theses.

Lecturer panel: Exchange experiences on best practices in education for sustainable development and interdisciplinary cooperation.

Students

Study programme: Choose your study programme and elective modules based on the integration of sustainability topics.

Communication of demand: Demand that sustainability is strategically anchored and implemented in departmental policies and engage in relevant committees and processes.



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Part A: Introduction, methodology and overall findings

Context, objectives and questions

Context

Sustainable development is the most important global challenge of the 21st century. Climate change, biodiversity loss, land-use change and disrupted biogeochemical cycles threaten the future of our planet. At the same time, hundreds of millions of people - especially in the global south - are unable to meet their legitimate basic needs. A good life for all is only possible if our economies and societies are transformed to operate in a safe and just space between the social baseline and the ecological ceiling (planetary boundaries) (see Part C).

Economic sciences has a central role to play in the sustainable transformation of society: it educates the specialists and managers of tomorrow, trains the specialists and managers of today, provides answers to important questions through its research, shapes people's understanding of the economy and advises politicians and administrators.

Objectives and questions

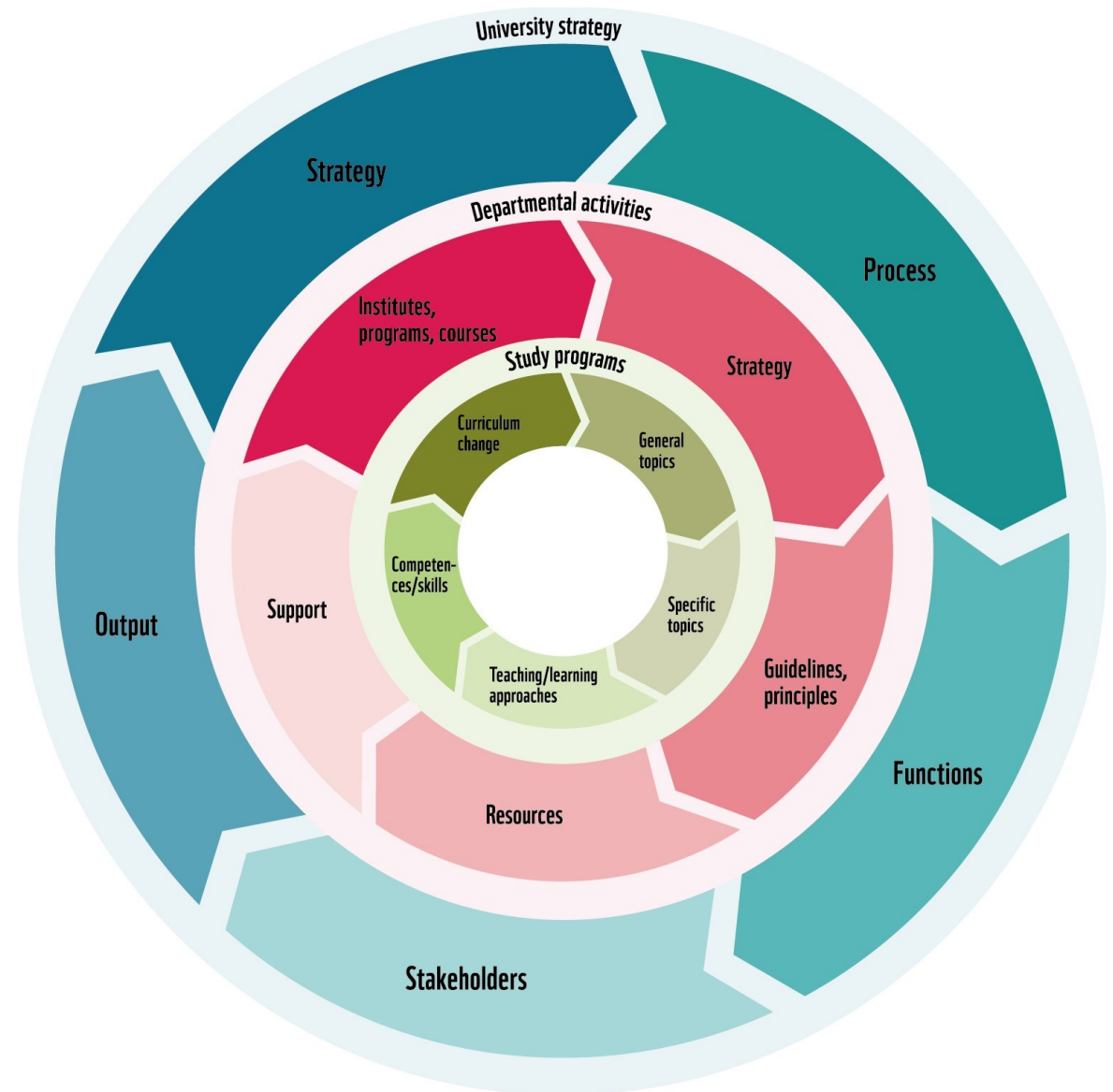
After 2018 and 2020, this is the third report on economics in Switzerland. It was produced in collaboration with econcept on the basis of online surveys. With the survey and the report, WWF Switzerland is pursuing the following objectives

- To make developments over the past three years visible and recognised.
- To inform the interested public about the current situation.
- To serve as a basis for recommendations to decision-makers.
- To enable university members and prospective students to compare programmes.

In particular, the report should answer the following questions

- To what extent is sustainable development incorporated in the strategies and activities of economics faculties/departments?
- To what extent are sustainable development topics and education for sustainable development approaches incorporated in economics programmes?
- How has this developed over the last three years?

This report is an assessment of the integration of sustainability at the level of study programmes and departmental activities. The University's strategic level is also being analysed and an assessment report will be published later in 2024 (see Figure right for an illustration of sustainability at different levels).



Three levels of integrating sustainability in higher education

At the level of faculties and departments, we are particularly interested in whether there is a sustainability strategy in place, whether lecturers have the necessary professional and teaching skills, whether there are sufficient resources and whether there is support for integrating sustainability. As a concrete result, we survey the sustainability orientated institutes, programmes and courses.

Sustainability topics and teaching/learning approaches

At the programme level, we focus on the general, cross-disciplinary sustainability topics and understanding, the subject-specific sustainability topics and the teaching/learning approaches that promote sustainability competences and skills.

Based on international reports (UNESCO 2017, UNESCO 2018, SDSN 2020), catalogues of topics have been defined together with experts from academia and civil society. We defined two central general themes for a generalist understanding of sustainability:

- Natural resources, global environmental problems and goals
- Sustainable development and sustainability concepts

We selected for the dsubject specific topics (including the two general topics):

- Business studies (14 topics)
- Economics (11 topics)
- Banking & Finance (11 topics)
- Combined programmes (22 topics)

The topics are described in a [supplementary sheet](#).

Just as important as the topics are the teaching/learning approaches that promote students' sustainability-related competences (see part C). We summarized the recommended approaches from the literature on education for sustainable development (e.g. HochN (without year), HochN (2021)) in three groups:

- Teaching/learning approaches to promote critical and systemic thinking
- Teaching/learning approaches to promote reflection on values and emotions
- Teaching/learning approaches to promote action competence for sustainable development

In addition, teaching/learning approaches that promote inter- and transdisciplinarity - as important for lecturers and researchers as for students - we have compiled:

- Interdisciplinary approaches to sustainable development
- Transdisciplinary approaches to sustainable development

The teaching/learning approaches are described in a [supplementary sheet](#).

In order to be able to integrate all relevant topics and different learning approaches in sufficient depth, it is necessary to reform study programmes. In the case of programmes that have been consistently redesigned with sustainable development in mind, we can speak of "curriculum change".

Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that all graduates of economics and management education can develop the necessary competencies to contribute to sustainable development as future professionals and managers.



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Methodological approach

The following chapter provides a brief description of the methodology used to design and analyse the survey.

Two surveys were conducted: one of study programmes with at least 50% of their content in economics and one of economics departments at universities and universities of applied sciences in Switzerland. The basic population of the survey included all degree programmes at Master's and Bachelor's level in the disciplines of Business Administration and Economics - individually and in combination - and Banking & Finance. Technically oriented programmes, such as business informatics, were not included in the survey.

The surveys were conducted using the *Cognito Forms tool*. They ran simultaneously but functioned independently of each other. Representatives from a total of 145 study programmes and 27 departments were invited to participate. For the programme survey, programme directors, university-wide operational sustainability officers and rectors were contacted. For the department survey, department chairs and deans were contacted.

Invitations to participate in both surveys were sent out on 15 January 2024. Both surveys were scheduled to run for approximately six weeks, with individual extensions allowed upon request and in consultation with WWF. Table 1 shows key data from the two surveys.

With an overall response rate of 59% (departments) and 54% (programmes), the survey provides solid insights into sustainability in economics and business studies at Swiss universities.

Concept of the questionnaires

The survey concepts were based on the WWF 2020 surveys, namely the “Studienratgeber Wirtschaftswissenschaften 2020” and the report “Nachhaltige Entwicklung in den Wirtschaftswissenschaften 2020”. The aim of the survey concept was to further develop these reports in order to strengthen their informative value. Due to the adjustments made, a comparison with the 2020 reports is only possible to a limited extent.

The surveys were extensive and required specific knowledge of the sustainability efforts of programmes and departments to complete. The survey was conducted in English. An accompanying WWF document described definitions and explained key concepts used in the survey to ensure the best possible understanding. The questionnaires and accompanying document are included in the Appendix.

Overall analysis logic

Responses from each institution were analysed individually and overall scores were calculated for both surveys. All analyses were carried out using Excel. The information provided by the participants was not extensively verified, but the participants had to ensure that the surveys were completed to the best of their knowledge. Below is a brief description of how the evaluations presented in this report were carried out.

Analysis of the departmental survey

The departmental survey consisted of a total of 28 substantive questions. Sixteen questions were open questions, 10 were single choice questions (yes/no/planned/not applicable or no answer) and two were multiple choice questions. The open questions were qualitatively analysed on a departmental basis. The 10 single-choice questions were analysed both on a department-specific basis using a traffic light system and on a general overview level.

Analysis of the programme survey

The analysis of the programme survey was more complex: On the one hand, it was necessary to differentiate according to subject area, degree level and type of course (compulsory or elective). On the other hand, qualitative data had to be quantified in such a way as to allow both a weighting appropriate to the integration and a simple, clear presentation. The evaluation and rating concept is presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Overview of Survey Populations and Participation

		Survey on Study Programs	Survey on Departments
Invited		145	27
Total no. of participants		79	16
Overall participation rate		54 %	59 %
Universities	Invited	88	16
	Entries	37	9
	Participation rate	42 %	56 %
Universities of Applied sciences	Invited	57	11
	Entries	42	7
	Participation rate	74 %	64 %
Invalid entries overall (duplicates, poor data quality, insufficient information)		12	6

Table 1: Survey Population and Response Rate in the surveys.

Survey on Study Programs: Analysis Regarding Teaching and Learning Approaches

Response Logic	Indication per course/module; multiple responses per course/module possible	
Response options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Teaching/learning approaches to promote critical and systemic thinking –Teaching/learning approaches to promote reflection on values and emotions –Teaching/learning approaches to promote action competence in sustainable development –Interdisciplinary approaches in the field of sustainable development –Transdisciplinary approaches in the field of sustainable development 	
Assessment logic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Valuation per approach –All approaches are weighted equally 	
Valuation formulas for individual analysis of study programs	Valuation of approach XY per course: $= ECTS * \frac{n \text{ course/module participants}}{n \text{ students of study program}}$ Valuation of approach XY per study program: $= \frac{\sum \text{all Valuations of approach XY per course}}{n \text{ courses of study program}}$	
Scaling logic for individual analysis of program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Strong embedding –Moderate embedding –Marginal embedding –No embedding 	>3 points (e.g. main focus and important topic in at least one course each) 1.5—3 points (e.g. focus and marginal topic in one course each) 0.01—1.5 points (e.g. marginal topic in two courses) 0 points

Table 2: Assessment and Rating Concept of the Teaching and Learning Approaches.

Survey on Study Programs: Analysis Regarding Sustainability Topics

Response Logic	Indication per topic; multiple responses per topic possible	
Response options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Main focus of mandatory course/module – Important topic of mandatory course/module – Marginal topic of mandatory course/module – Main focus of elective course/module – Important topic of elective course/module – Marginal topic of elective course/module 	
Assessment logic for individual analysis of programs	Separate analysis for mandatory and elective courses	
Quantification logic for individual analysis of programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Main focus of mandatory course/module – Important topic of mandatory course/module – Marginal topic of mandatory course/module 	= 3 pt. = 2 pt. = 1 pt.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Main focus of elective course/module – Important topic of elective course/module – Marginal topic of elective course/module 	= 3 pt. = 2 pt. = 1 pt.
Scaling logic for individual analysis of program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strong embedding – Moderate embedding – Marginal embedding – No embedding 	>5 points (e.g. main focus and important topic in at least one course each) 3—4 points (e.g. focus and marginal topic in one course each) 1—2 points (e.g. marginal topic in two courses) 0 points
Assessment logic in overarching analysis of programs	Offsetting of mandatory and elective courses: To emphasize the higher relevance of mandatory courses, the corresponding scores were multiplied by 1.5.	
Valuation logic in the overarching analysis of programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The weighted points for mandatory courses and the points for elective courses were summed for each topic and program. 2. For each topic and each of the individual scale levels according to the scale described below, the corresponding number of study programs was counted. 3. The resulting number was divided by the number of programs in the respective category to establish an averaged value of embedding. 	
Scaling logic in overarching analysis of program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strong embedding – Moderate embedding – Marginal embedding – No embedding 	>6 points (e.g. main focus in mandatory course and important in elective) 3—6 points (e.g. main focus in mandatory course) <3 points (e.g. important in elective course) 0 points

Table 3: Assessment and Rating Concept of the Sustainability Topics.

Results departments

The following findings shed light on how economics departments at universities and universities of applied sciences are promoting the integration of sustainable development at a strategic and operational level. The questions always referred to the activities of the departments themselves, independent of or in addition to measures taken at the level of the institution as a whole. Only 'yes' percentages are shown in the graphs, i.e. the proportion of respondents who had implemented the measures at the time of the survey.

Overall integration of sustainable development

With regard to the strategic promotion of the embedding of sustainable development, it can be seen that the nine strategic measures surveyed are implemented on average by half of the departments at universities of applied sciences and around a third of the university departments. The range of results is relatively wide, which shows that certain approaches are more in line with the trend than others.

Among university departments, sustainability strategies or guiding principles for sustainable development at faculty or department level are particularly common, with two-thirds of respondents having one. The other measures are missing in more than half of the university departments surveyed. Among UAS departments, the most common measures are sustainability-related strategic guidelines based on a university-wide sustainability strategy, content-related interdisciplinary guidelines for integrating sustainability into research, and a committee for coordinating the integration of sustainability standards or international principles - all three measures are implemented by six of the seven UAS departments surveyed. Guidelines for the integration of sustainability in cooperation with partners in practice are not very common, at least at departmental level - neither in teaching nor in research, and neither between universities nor between universities of applied sciences. None of the university departments have guidelines for collaborative research projects with practice partners.

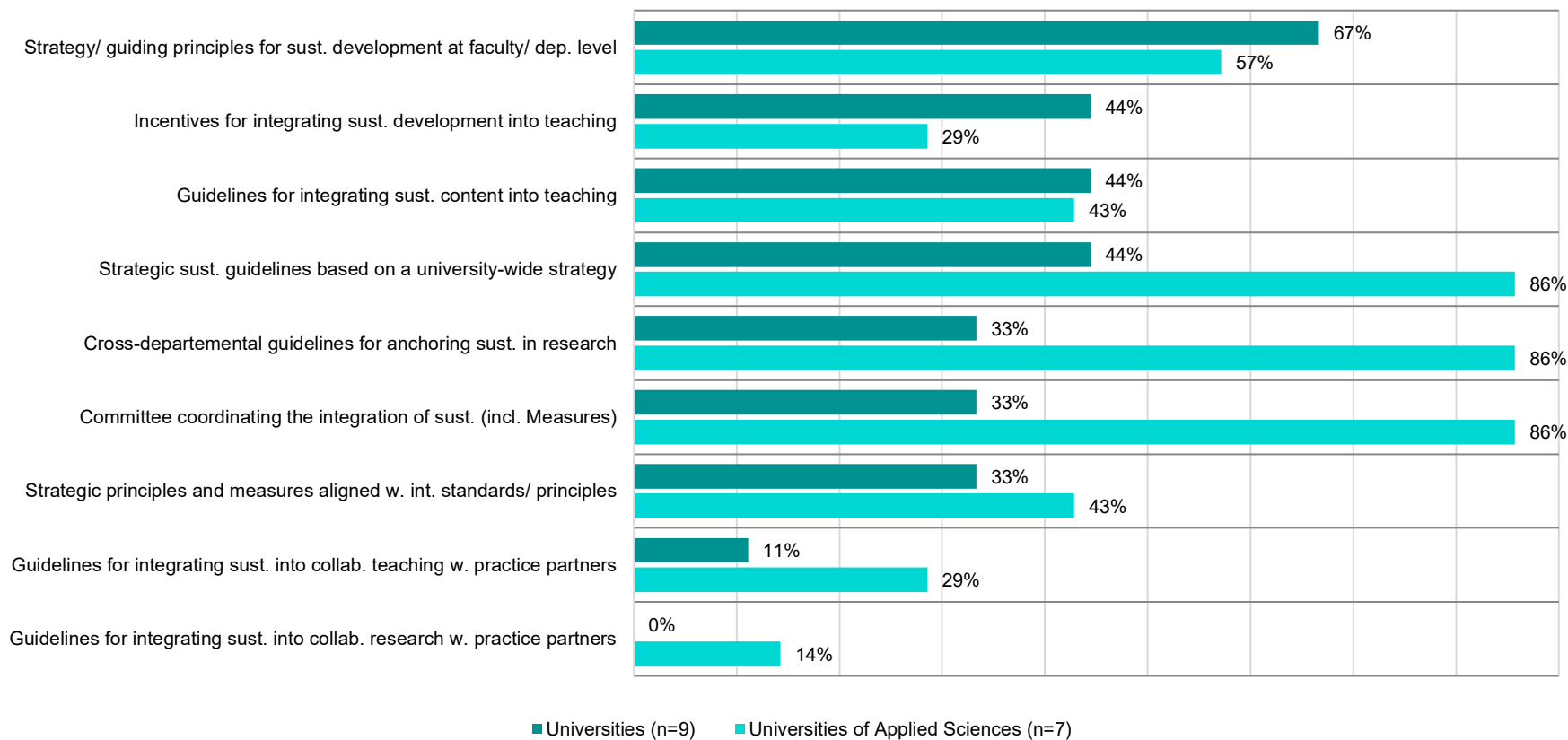


Figure 1: Overall Embedding of Sustainable Development at Department Levels.

Need for support to better integrate sustainable development topics and approaches

In order to better integrate the sustainability topics, the departments would mainly like more financial resources and more exchange of best practices. The trans- and interdisciplinary skills of lecturers and researchers are also seen as important, especially at universities. Aspects of human resources and the teaching skills of lecturers were mentioned only once in each sample.

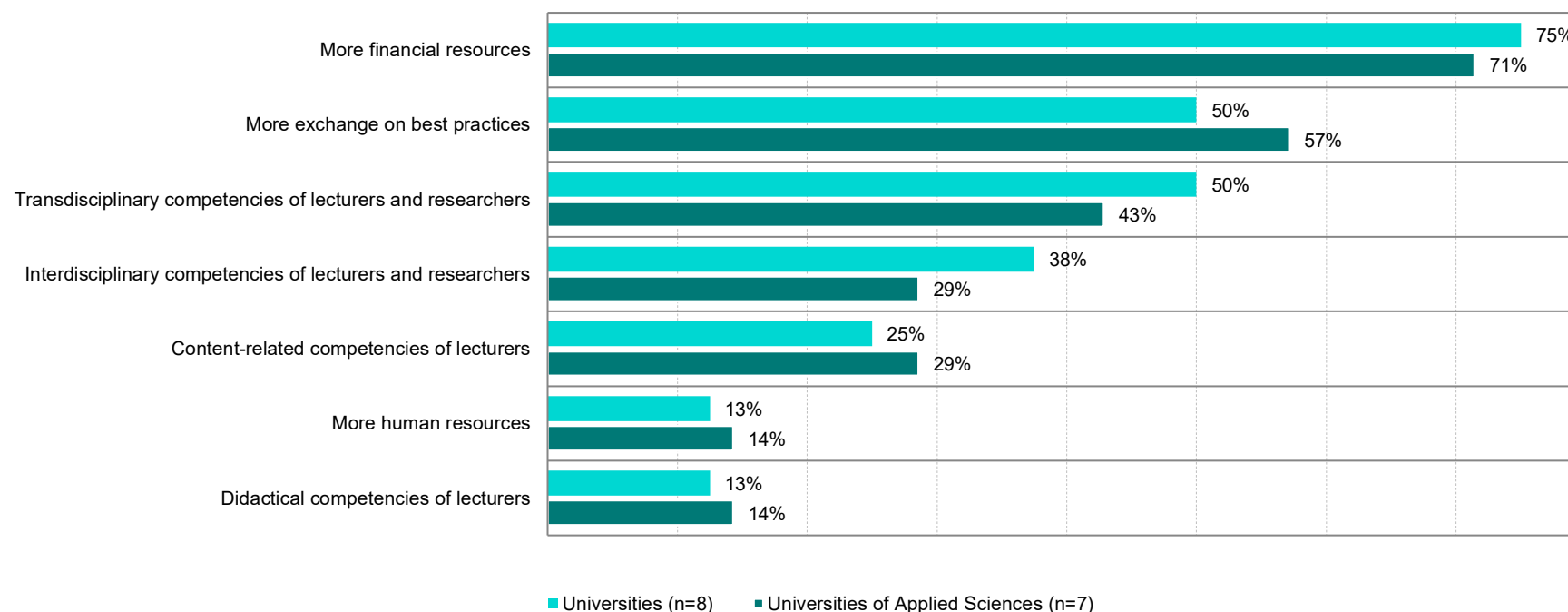


Figure 2: The need for support for better integration of sustainable development issues and approaches at departmental level.

Promotion of lecturers' knowledge on sustainable development

The majority of departments in both universities (56%) and universities of applied sciences (71%) report that they promote their lecturers' knowledge of sustainable development and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) competences through workshops. In universities, the second most common way of promoting these competences is to provide lecturers with resources for self-study (44%). This is also the case for universities of applied sciences, although guided training is just as common (both 43%). Universities of applied sciences also frequently offer support measures that we did not ask about, such as internal events and workshops. However, it was also frequently reported that institutions rely on lecturers' own responsibility. None of the departments reported that they do not promote knowledge about sustainable development and ESD competences, although two out of nine universities did not answer this question.

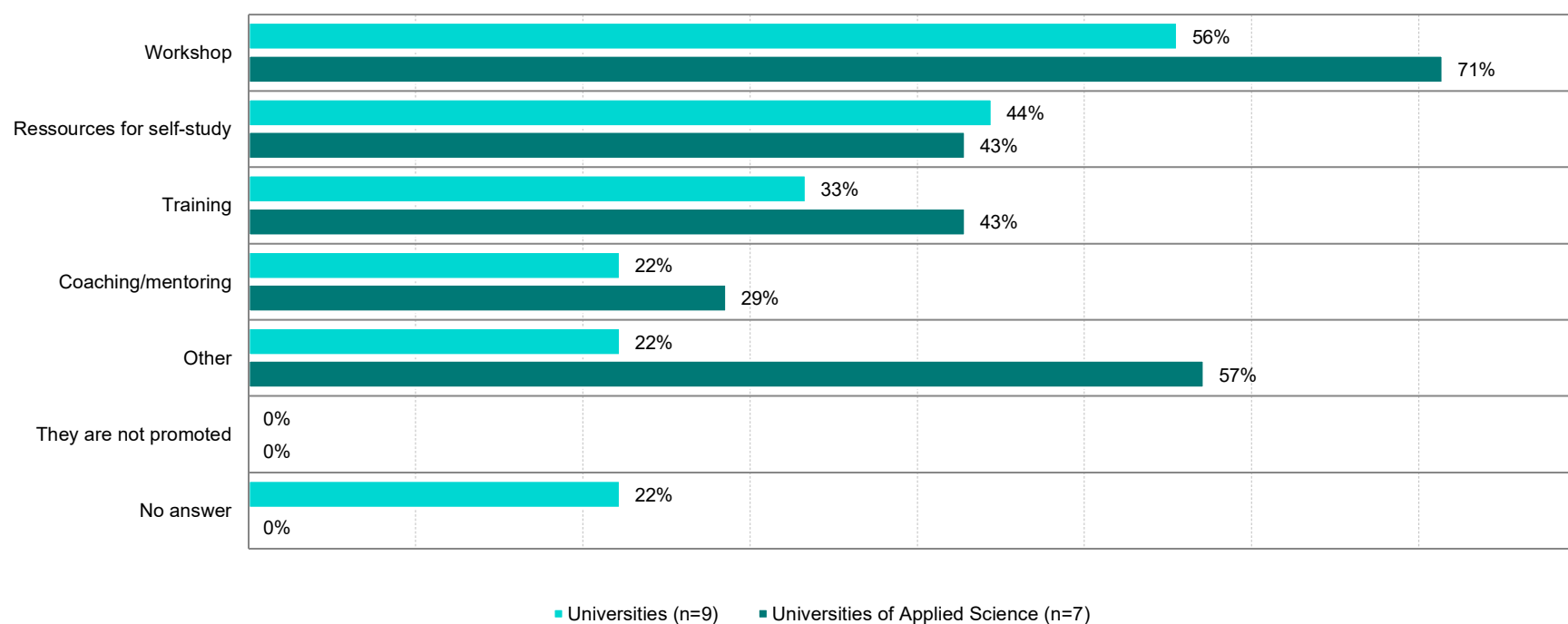


Figure 3: Promoting the knowledge of the lecturers on sustainable development and their ESD competences at the departmental level.

Further results

International Principles and Standards: The majority of faculties/departments are guided by the principles and measures of international networks or quality standards for business schools: 5 are part of PRME, 3 of AACSB, 2 of EQUIS and one of the Business School Impact Strategy (BSIS).

Resources: The resources available to embed sustainability in the department/faculty vary widely: from 0 to 12 FTE and from 0 to CHF 2.1 million.

Recruitment: When recruiting academic staff, competence and experience in sustainability are always a criterion in two departments, in 6 only in some institutes and in 9 only in some professorships.

Communication: Most information on sustainability is provided through internal events/panel discussions and lectures (11 of all departments). This is followed by newsletters (7), internal e-mails (5), departmental or university-wide information campaigns (3) and the PRME or sustainability report (2).

Structures and study programmes: Most departments have institutes, competence centres and professorships in the field of sustainability. The number of study programmes in the field of sustainable development has increased in recent years, especially at masters and postgraduate level.

Other: Other activities to promote sustainability are mentioned: Awards, challenges, exhibitions, CO2 calculators, a jointly developed declaration as well as Sustainability Week, new professorships and membership of sustainability-oriented leadership or research networks.

Results study programmes

Note: As already described in the Methods section, it should be borne in mind that the following evaluations have used mixed calculations to balance the data on compulsory and elective courses/modules, Bachelor's and Master's programmes and/or university programmes and programmes at universities of applied sciences. The results presented are therefore only a high-level approximation and should be treated with caution.

- Universities and universities of applied sciences differ fundamentally in various aspects, e.g. in their mission, thematic focus, structure, orientation towards basic research or practice, etc. In addition, the following aspects must be taken into account when interpreting the results:
- Economics programmes are only offered at universities.
- Banking & Finance is a specialisation at Master's level that is offered at Bachelor's level at only one university in Switzerland.

The overall integration of sustainability issues

The analysis of the integration of sustainability issues in economics programmes at universities shows an overall strong integration of sustainability issues: On average, sustainability topics are mostly integrated moderately (54%) to strongly (14%). However, on average, only about a third of the topics have a low level of integration (26%) or no integration at all (6%).

A look at the results for study programmes at universities of applied sciences shows that on average 60% of the topics examined are moderately well integrated and 5% of the topics are strongly integrated. On average, however, every tenth subject (11%) is not integrated at all.

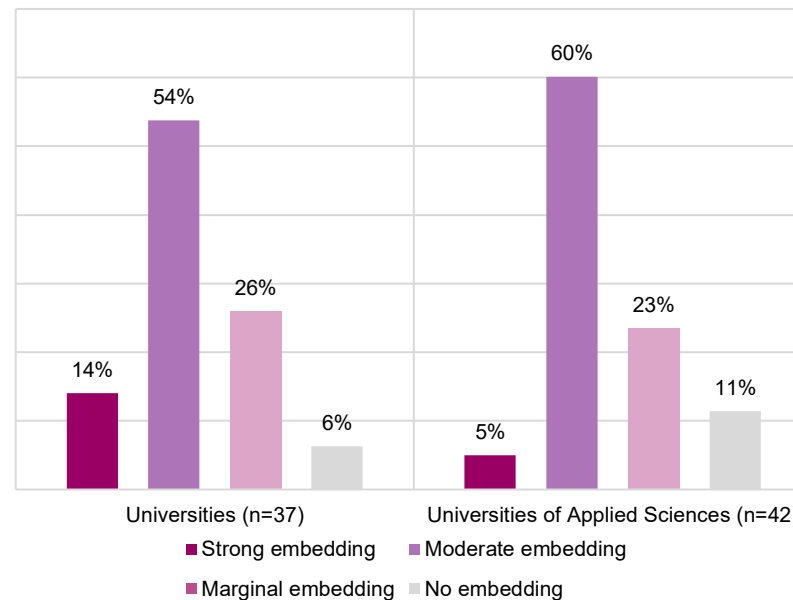


Figure 4: Average level of integration of sustainability issues by type of institution.

Overall integration of sustainability topics at universities

A closer look at the integration of the different sustainability topics in the university programmes shows that, on average, the topics are more strongly integrated at Bachelor's level than at Master's level. At Bachelor's level, on average almost every fifth topic analysed is strongly integrated (17%), compared to only 10% of all topics at Master's level. At both levels, on average, more than half of the sustainability topics analysed are moderately integrated and about a quarter are marginally integrated. The average proportion of topics that are not integrated at all is 9% at Master's level, which is four times higher than at Bachelor's level.

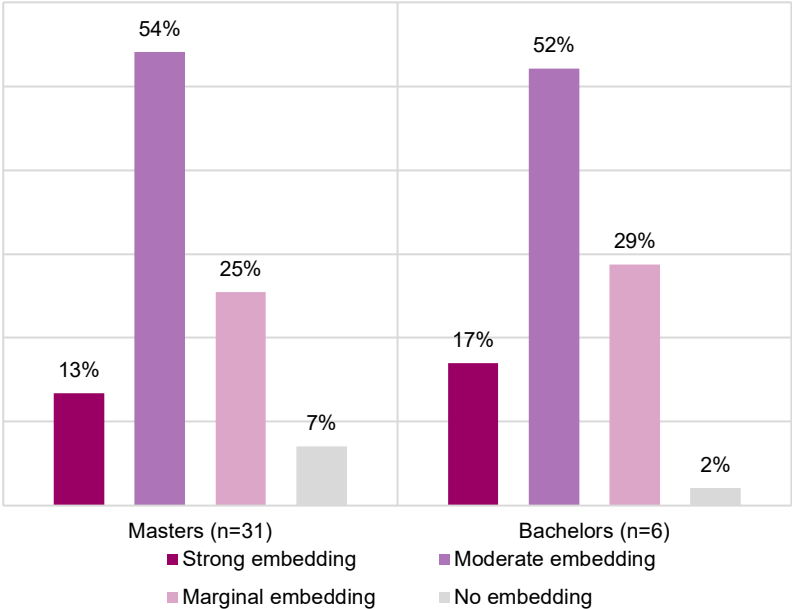


Figure 5: Average level of integration of sustainability issues in universities by degree level.

Overall integration of sustainability issues at universities of applied sciences

The analysis of the integration of sustainability topics in study programmes at universities of applied sciences shows a slightly stronger integration at master's level than at bachelor's level: While on average 8% of the topics are strongly integrated at the Master's level, this applies to only 2% of the topics at the Bachelor's level. However, if the average share of moderately integrated topics is taken into account, the difference is almost equalised. It is striking that on average 15% of topics are not integrated at all at Master's level.

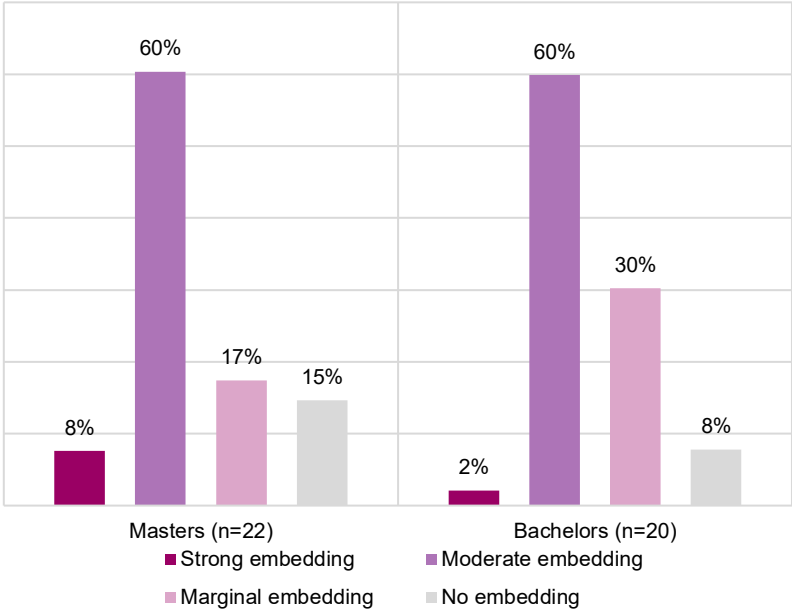


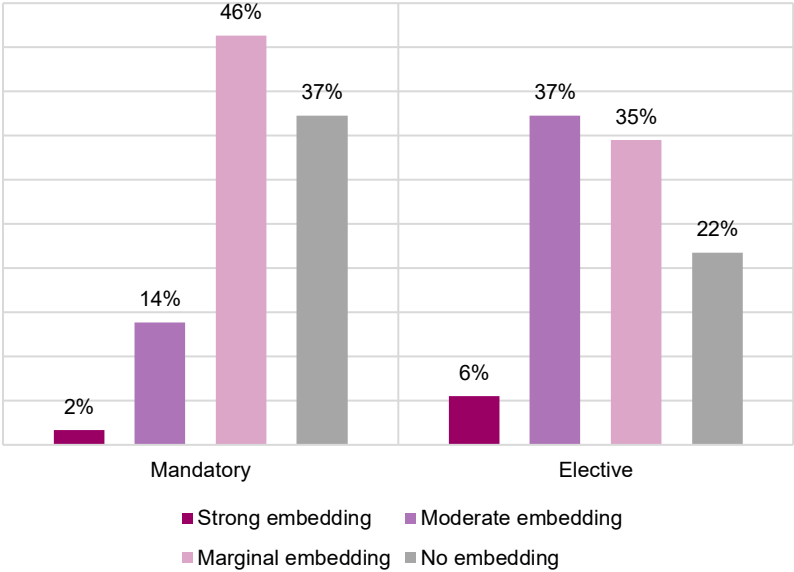
Figure 6: Average level of integration of sustainability issues in universities of applied sciences by degree level.

In the previous sections, we have always added together the anchoring in compulsory and elective courses in order to obtain an overall view of the anchoring of subjects. In doing so, we have given 1.5 times more weight to the anchoring in compulsory courses than to the anchoring in elective courses, in order to weight the compulsory nature accordingly. We now want to take a closer look at the extent to which the institutions surveyed regard the study of sustainability as an absolute prerequisite for a degree. To do this, we have calculated separately for the two types of HEIs and for each topic how often and to what extent the topic is included in compulsory and elective courses, and then calculated the mean values for the two types of courses for each type of higher education institution.

It can be seen that, depending on the field of study, there are large differences in the extent to which the subject is taught in compulsory or optional courses. In business administration and combined programmes, there are many programmes that anchor sustainability issues almost exclusively in compulsory courses. In economics, on the other hand, the opposite is true. As a result, the cases with no anchoring are more significant than in the previous analyses.

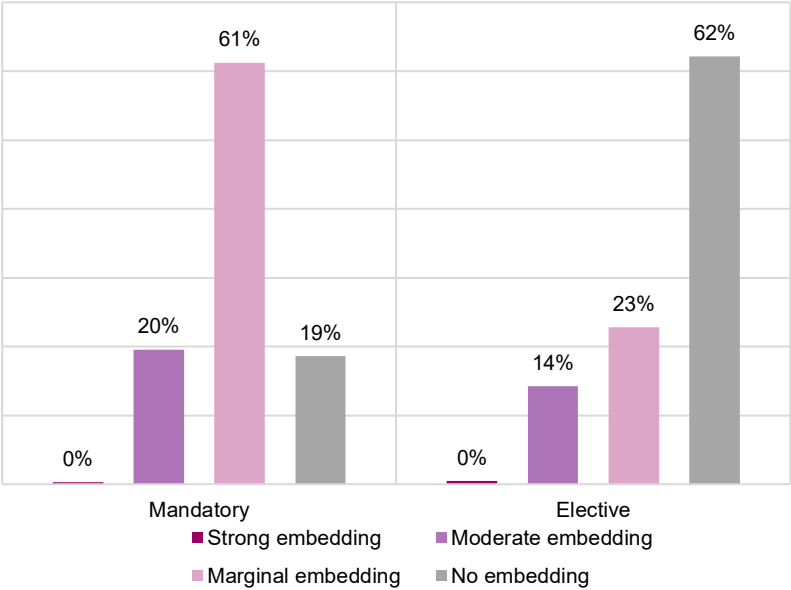
Integration of sustainability topics in compulsory and optional courses at universities

Looking at universities only, it is clear that sustainability issues are more often incorporated in elective courses than in mandatory courses. If we add up the information from the 37 university programmes on the integration of sustainability in compulsory courses, we see that in more than a third of the cases a topic relevant to the subject area was not integrated at all. In almost half of the cases, at least a marginal integration in compulsory courses was reported.



Integration of sustainability topics in compulsory and elective courses at universities of applied sciences

At universities of applied sciences, on the other hand, sustainability is more strongly integrated in compulsory courses than in elective courses, although in almost two-thirds of the cases of compulsory courses there is no integration at all. In elective courses, however, the integration is much weaker, as the share of courses with no integration at all is more than 60%.



Overall integration of sustainability topics in business studies

Figure 7 shows the importance given to different sustainability issues in Business Administration programmes. We have focused on the eleven most strongly integrated topics out of 14 that were assessed for Business Administration programmes. The following three themes have the lowest rates of strong integration and are therefore not shown: "Natural Resources, Global Environmental Problems and Goals", "Sustainable Consumption", "Business and Human Rights" (in order of decreasing strong integration).

The most strongly integrated topic is "Sustainable development and sustainability concepts", which is strongly integrated in an average of 21% of the programmes examined. At the other end of the spectrum is "Reactive Corporate Social Responsibility", which is strongly integrated in an average of only 11% of the programmes. If we include moderate integration, we can see how differently the different study programmes - of both types of institutions - assess the importance of the topics surveyed: While 'Digitalisation, AI and sustainable development' is moderately to strongly integrated in almost half of all business administration programmes, 'Sustainable development and sustainability concepts' is moderately to strongly integrated in nine out of ten programmes. Looking more closely at the individual business administration programmes, it can be seen that integration is stronger in electives than in compulsory courses.

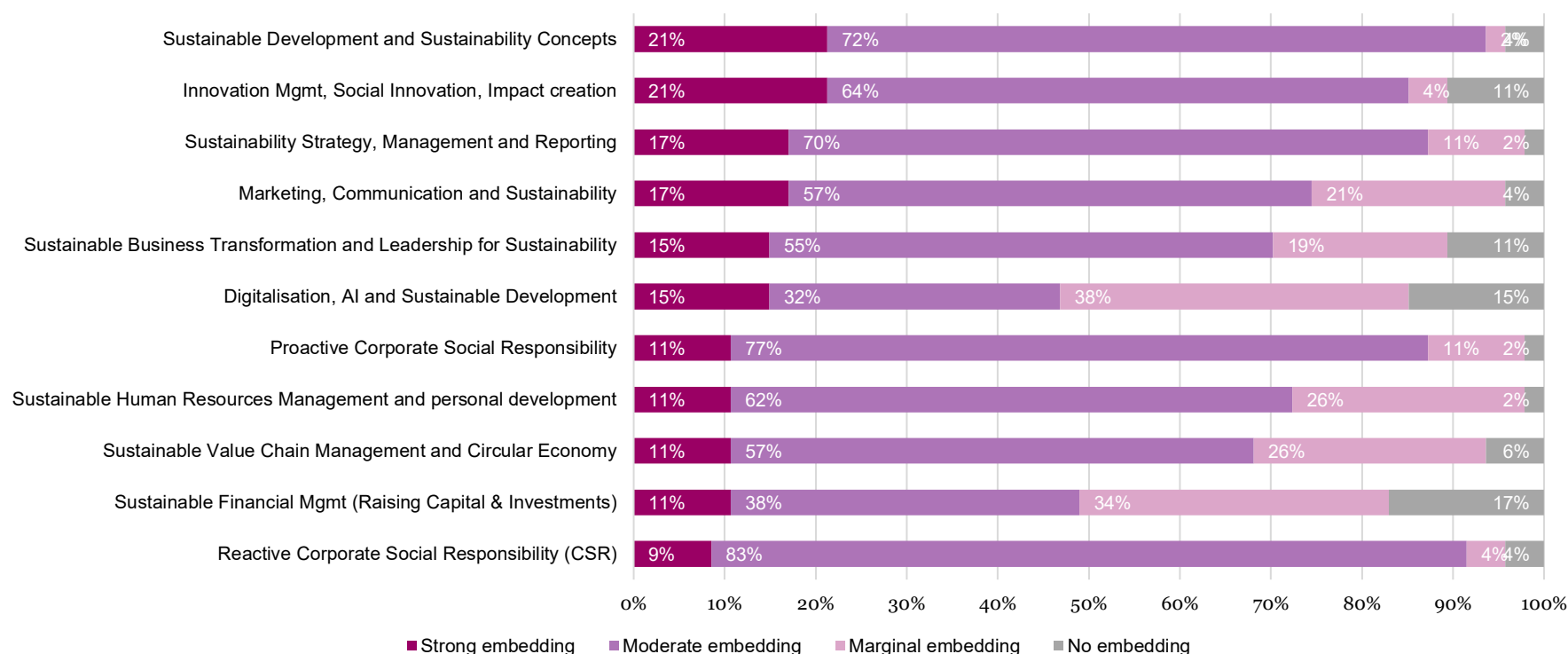


Figure 7: Integration of sustainability issues into business studies programmes.

Overall integration of sustainability issues in the field of economics

Sustainability topics are significantly less integrated in economics programmes (taught at universities only) than in business administration programmes: Overall, no topic is strongly integrated in any of the participating economics programmes. However, all but three of the eleven topics studied are at least marginally incorporated.

The graph below shows the results for all eleven sustainability topics surveyed in economics programmes. On average, sustainable consumption is the least integrated, with a moderate integration of 30% and an average marginal integration of 40%, but on average it is not addressed in about 30% of the economics programmes. Overall, the most relevant topics are 'Globalisation & Sustainability', 'Economics of the Environment, Resources, Biodiversity and Climate' and 'Equal Opportunities and Distribution', which have an average integration level of 60%. All in all, it can be seen that although sustainability issues are rarely the main focus of economics programmes, they are usually at least touched upon, albeit mostly in elective courses.

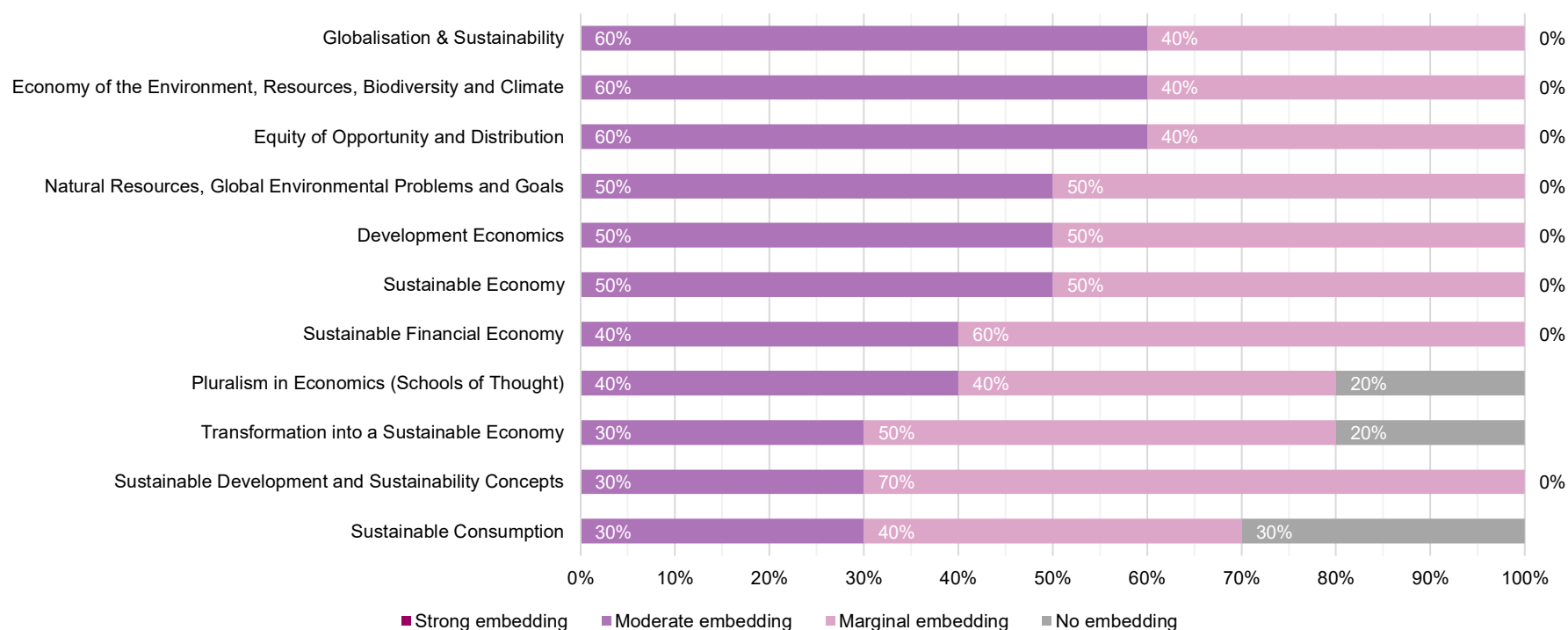


Figure 8: Integrating sustainability issues into business programmes. n=10.

Overall integration of sustainability issues in the field of Banking & Finance

The results for the field of Banking & Finance also have a different meaning, as the participating programmes in this field are all Master's programmes. Again, the graph shows the data for all eleven topics analysed in this field. As in the case of Economics, there is no topic with an average high level of integration. However, there are three topics with a moderate level of integration (86%): 'Understanding and concepts of sustainability', 'Sustainable finance' and 'Corporate social responsibility'. 'Climate Change Finance is more strongly integrated than "Biodiversity and Finance", but still these two highly important topics are not integrated at all in some programmes.

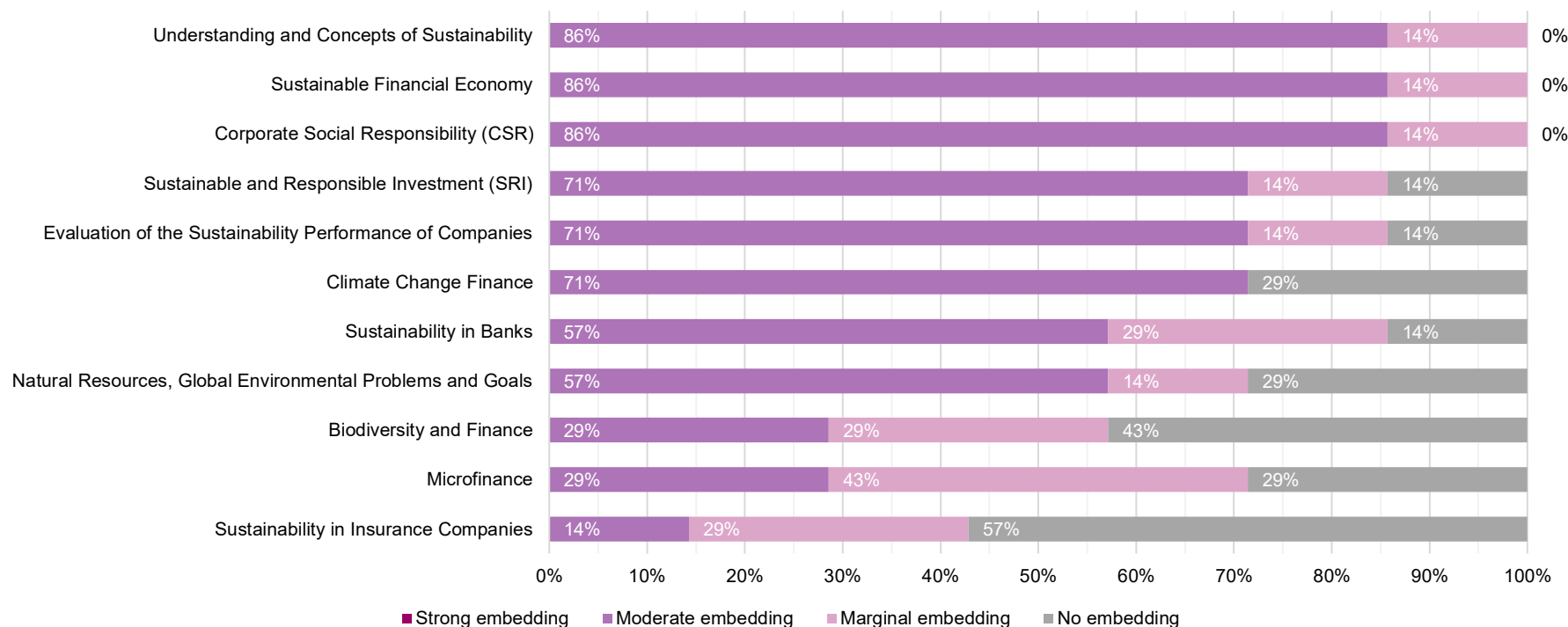


Figure 9: Integration of sustainability into banking and finance programmes. n=7.

Overall integration of sustainability issues in combined business and economics programmes

The results for combined programmes are similar to those for Business Administration alone. This suggests that sustainability topics have so far been more relevant in Business Administration than in the other fields. For the combined programmes, we surveyed a total of 22 topics; again, for the sake of consistency, the graph only shows the results for eleven topics.

Innovation management, social innovation, impact creation' is the most strongly integrated theme, being strongly integrated in an average of 20% of programmes and moderately integrated in 60%. The theme "Natural resources, global environmental problems and goals" is on average strongly integrated in 13% of the programmes and moderately integrated in 87%, i.e. it is of moderate to high relevance for all programmes analysed. Overall, it is noteworthy that there are seven themes that are integrated in all combined programmes.

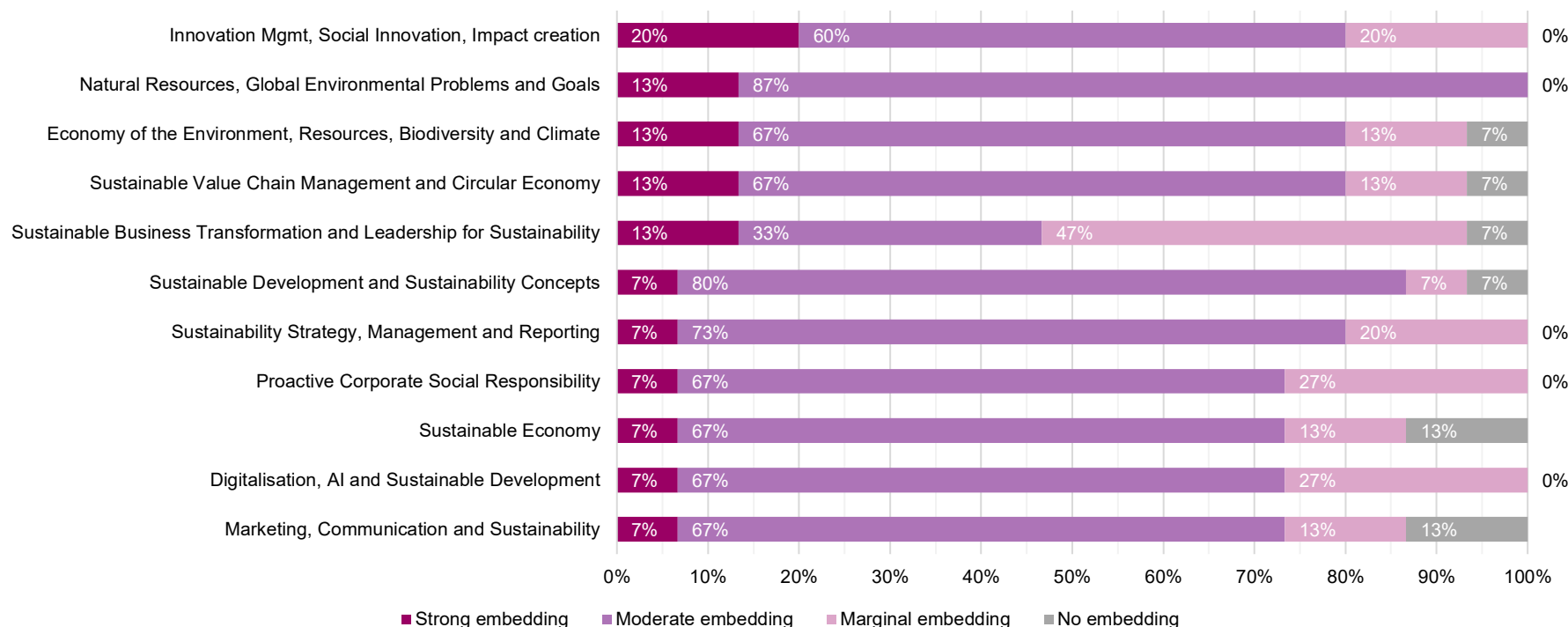


Figure 10: Integration of sustainability into business and economics programmes. n=15.

Overall integration of sustainability issues in all degree programmes

The subject-specific analyses have shown the average degree to which sustainability issues are integrated into the study programmes examined. It can be seen that sustainability issues are not strongly integrated in either economics or banking and finance.

If we want to compare at a higher, overarching level how strongly the programmes in the different subject areas are invested - on average - in integrating sustainability issues, we have to aggregate the degree of integration of all sustainability issues for each subject area. The following graph shows the mean values of the degree of integration of all topics per integration level for each subject area.

It can be seen that in Business Administration, sustainability is generally strongly anchored with an average of 12% and moderately anchored with 60%. In Banking & Finance, sustainability issues are generally most often moderately anchored, but in some programmes various issues play no role at all: In total, the seven programmes in Banking & Finance reported 16 times that a topic was not anchored at all. This means that Banking & Finance has the highest average percentage of missing anchoring of all sustainability topics. Students in Banking & Finance are therefore most likely to avoid having to deal with sustainability issues during their studies. Economics students, on the other hand, are most likely to have a low to moderate exposure to sustainability issues during their studies. Those taking a combined degree have a 60% chance of being exposed to sustainability issues. As mentioned above, economics courses are only offered by universities, not by universities of applied sciences.

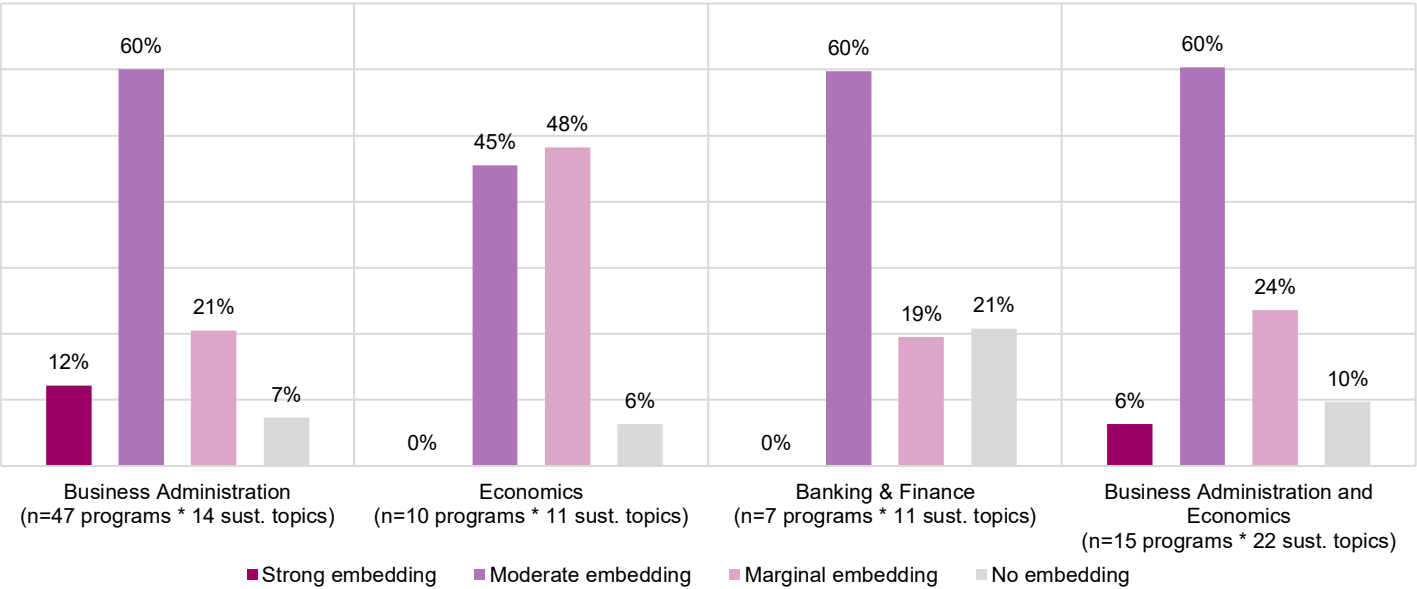


Figure 11: The overall integration of sustainability issues in the different fields of study.

Overall integration of teaching and learning approaches in universities

Turning now to the analyses of the integration of teaching and learning approaches with significant relevance to the teaching of sustainability, we see that approaches promoting critical competence for sustainable development are only weakly integrated into university programmes. The highest rates of strong integration are found in the approaches promoting critical and systemic thinking, action competence in sustainable development and reflection on values and emotions, with a strong integration rate of between 17% and 19%. Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches are strongly integrated in 8% and 3% of cases respectively. In terms of moderate integration, approaches that promote critical and systemic thinking show the strongest incorporation, with 19% strong integration and 28% moderate integration. But even this category of teaching and learning approaches is only marginally (42%) or not at all (11%) integrated in more than half of the programmes. The rate of no integration at all is highest for transdisciplinary approaches, at 61%.

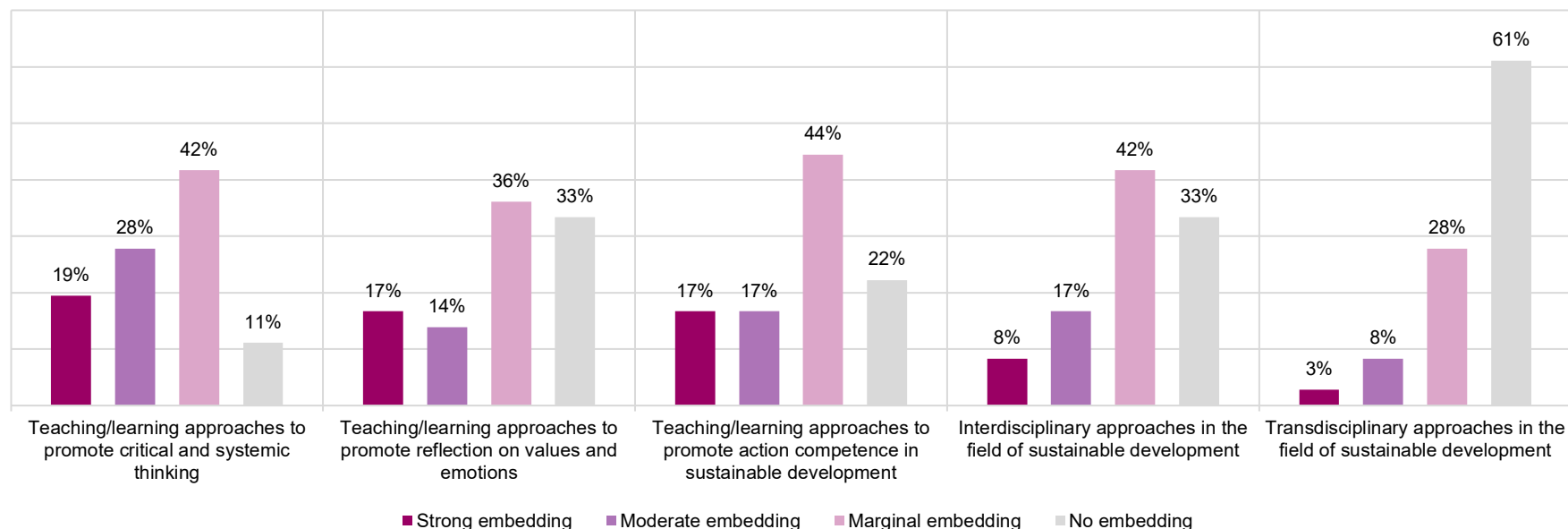


Figure 12: Average level of integration of teaching and learning approaches in universities overall.

Overall integration of teaching and learning approaches at universities of applied sciences

The integration of teaching and learning approaches at universities of applied sciences is mostly marginal, with the rate of marginal integration for all approaches being around 50%. Transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches are the least common. The most strongly integrated approaches are those that promote critical and systemic thinking (18%) and action competence in sustainable development (13%). For the other three approaches, the rate corresponding to strong integration is 8%.

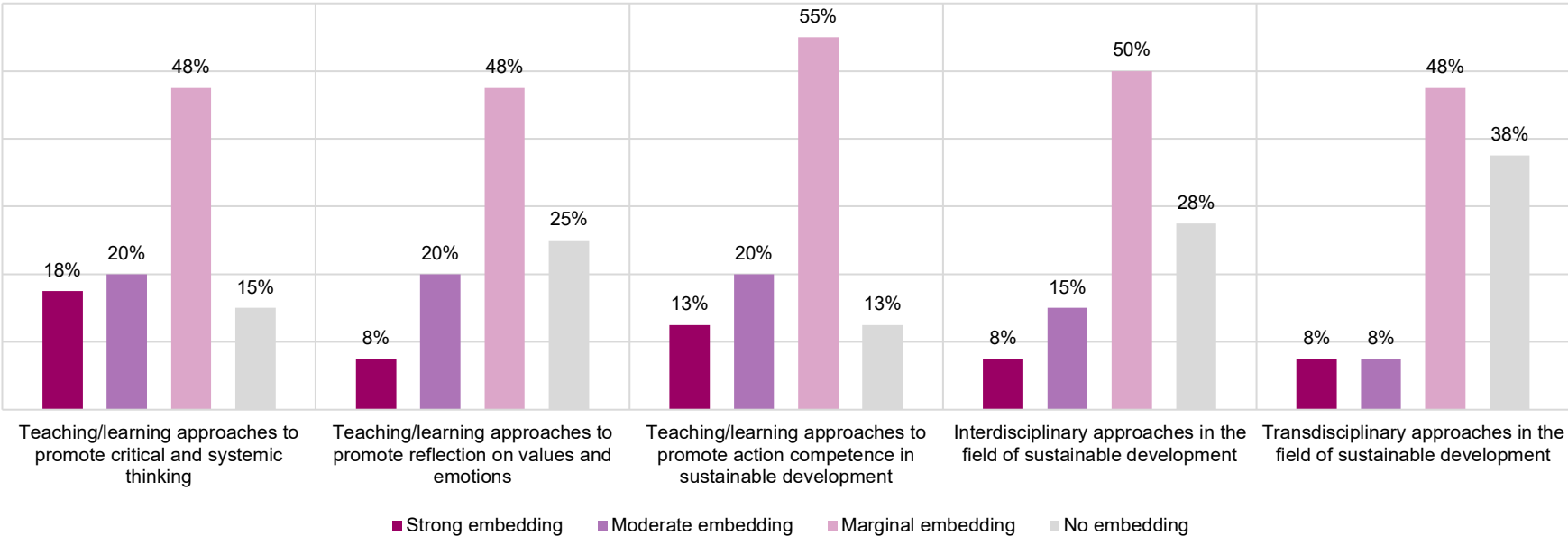


Figure 13: Average overall level of integration of teaching and learning approaches in universities of applied sciences.

Need for support to better integrate sustainable development topics and approaches

Finally, we asked the heads of study programs and/or their representatives where they have the greatest need for support in order to better integrate sustainable development topics and approaches into their programs. The most frequent demands were for more financial resources (43 %) and better transdisciplinary (41 %) and content-related (39 %) competencies among the lecturers and researchers affiliated with the study program (41 %). The fact that the aspect of transdisciplinary competencies is raised so often is remarkable in that such approaches are considered to be barely integrated, as can be seen in the two previous charts. This and the focus on content-related competencies indicate that the heads of study programs or their representatives insist on the personal responsibility of lecturers and researchers and expect them to learn more about these issues through continuing education and place more emphasis on transdisciplinary approaches as well as sustainability topics on their own initiative. Further personnel support is only the fourth most frequently requested, but also by more than a third of participants.

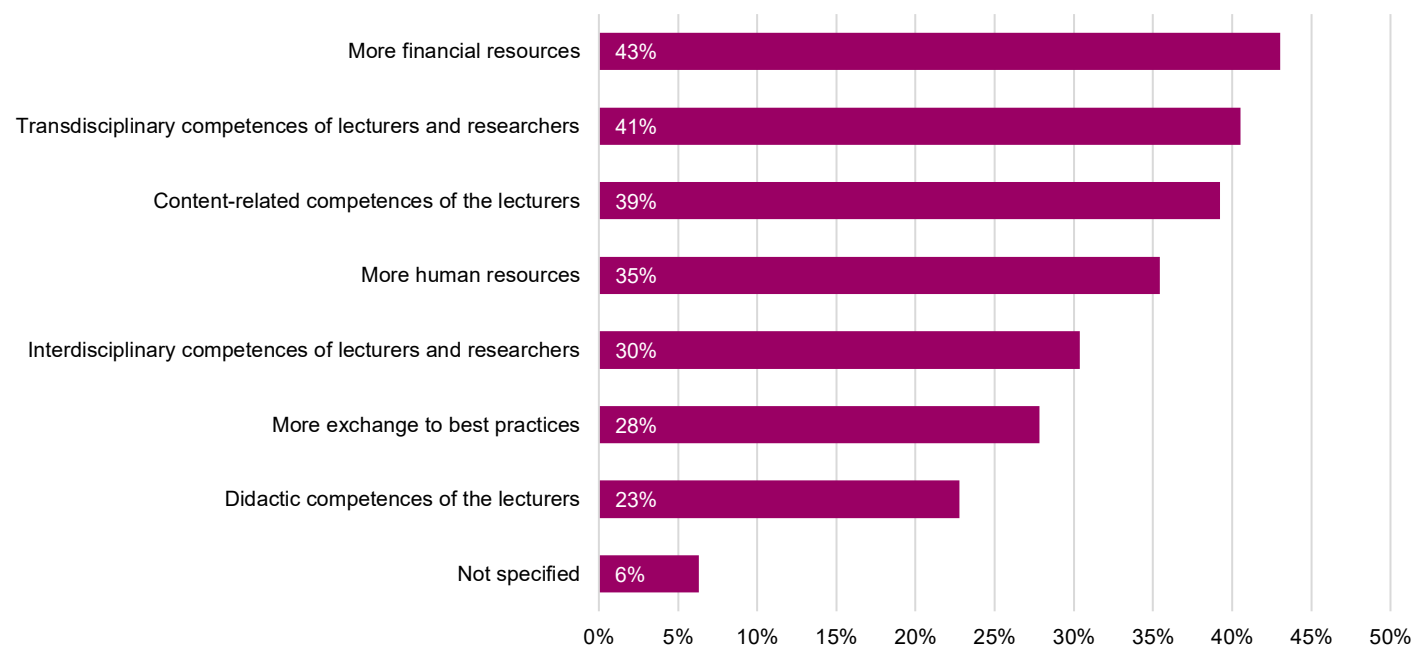


Figure 14: Need for support to better integrate sustainable development topics and approaches. n=79.

Conclusion

Departments

The majority of departments have set themselves strategic goals in the area of sustainability, but on average only a minority have established guidelines, committees or targeted support measures, with the universities of applied sciences performing slightly better than the universities.

Faculty development in the direction of sustainable development (recruitment criterion in all job advertisements, promotion of lecturers, incentives for curriculum development projects and motivational communication) is hardly visible in most faculties and departments.

There are interesting differences in need for support to better integrate sustainable development: While deans identify a greater need for best-practice exchange, heads of study programs indicate a greater need for the promotion of lecturers' content-related skills. There is a similar assessment that there is a great need for financial resources and for the promotion of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary skills among lecturers.

Some departments have started to promote teachers' knowledge and skills in sustainable development through workshops and training.

However: Measured against the needs and the necessary sustainable transformation of the economy and society, departments should become more ambitious and accelerate their contributions to sustainable development. Based on a sustainability strategy, they must set ambitious goals, implement measures accordingly and measure success.

Study programmes: Topics

Sustainable development issues are best integrated in business programmes, followed by combined programmes. They are much less integrated in economics and banking and finance programmes. Universities perform slightly better than universities of applied sciences.

Over the last three years, sustainable development topics have become much more integrated into study programmes and are also treated more intensively on average.

However, when looking at the individual sustainability topics, their integration into compulsory courses is mostly marginal to non-existent at both universities of applied sciences and universities. While the integration in elective courses is slightly better at universities, it is even worse at universities of applied sciences.

As a result, many students can only acquire relevant knowledge about sustainable development by actively complementing their required courses with relevant electives. Most students therefore receive neither a sufficient general understanding of sustainability nor the necessary expertise in their discipline. This should change in the future, as sustainable development is a must for our economy and society.

Study Programmes: Teaching and learning approaches

In terms of teaching/learning methods to promote sustainability-related skills, critical and systemic thinking is most often promoted, followed by the promotion of action skills, and then the promotion of reflection on values and emotions. Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches are used the least. On average, these approaches are somewhat more firmly incorporated in universities than in universities of applied sciences; overall, the embedding is rather low in both types of institutions and for all approaches.

The integration of teaching/learning approaches to promote sustainability-related competences has developed only slightly over the last three years. Courses still predominantly use traditional approaches.

The key competences for sustainable development cannot be acquired in lectures and seminars alone. Programmes are still far from training their students to become change-makers for a sustainable transformation of the economy.

The recommendations derived from the conclusions can be found in the management summary.

Inspiring examples

The results of the report show that, despite some changes in degree programmes and departments towards sustainability, there is a lack of innovative ideas at all levels of Swiss universities. The following section presents five inspiring examples from Switzerland that should motivate other universities to take similar initiatives.

Student Impact, Universität St. Gallen

Student Impact is a student-run management consultancy at the University of St. Gallen that specialises in sustainable business. Originally a spin-off of oikos St. Gallen, the consultancy was founded in 2012 to make business in the service of sustainability the new norm.

Consulting services are offered to start-ups with sustainable business models as well as to established small and medium-sized companies that want to become more sustainable. Services include sustainability strategy development, sustainable product portfolio development, market analysis, expansion plans and marketing strategies for sustainable start-ups and organisations.

Student Impact also brings the topic of sustainable business into the classroom. Since 2021, the University of St. Gallen offers the student-led course "Be the Change: Discovering Consulting and Sustainability", which can be accredited for all bachelor students. The course is led by Jost Hamschmidt, a lecturer and project manager at the HSG's Responsibility & Sustainability department. However, the course is almost entirely run by the active students of Student Impact, with a strong emphasis on peer-to-peer learning rather than traditional unilateral teaching approaches. Thereby, Be the Change seeks to nurture a learning community embedded in a safe and hierarchy-free space that activates students' innate sense of responsibility, self-efficacy and motivation in the context of the grand sustainability challenges of our time.

This innovative seminar bridges the gap between academic theory and practical application, allowing students to work directly on projects that have a real impact. The peer-to-peer teaching model fosters a collaborative learning environment where students learn from each other, share insights, and develop solutions to complex sustainability challenges. By working directly with companies, students gain valuable experience and a deep understanding of sustainable business practices and the

Embedding Sustainability into Economics and Business Education. An Assessment of Curricula and Strategies at Swiss Universities 2024



Figure 15: Picture by Lautenschlager.

challenges involved in their implementation. Student Impact and Be The Change not only enhance the students' educational experience, but also amplify the impact of sustainability initiatives across industries, making a significant contribution to the global movement towards a more sustainable future.

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House of Sustainability, Università della Svizzera italiana

The House of Sustainability in Airolo is a pioneering initiative of the Università della Svizzera italiana (USI), dedicated to promoting the culture of sustainable development through education, expert exchanges and community engagement. Inaugurated in 2024 with the vision of making sustainability an integral part of university education, the House of Sustainability offers educational and training activities to the entire USI community (students, academic and administrative staff), as well as to schools, groups, organisations and companies wishing to explore sustainability issues in greater depth. In collaboration with "L'ideatorio USI", the House of Sustainability proposes events, conferences, debates, commented films, participatory projects, and more to promote dialogue between science and society on sustainable development issues.

The Alpine Seminar is at the heart of the House of Sustainability's commitment to sustainability and transdisciplinarity. Open to undergraduate students from all six faculties of the USI, this seminar brings together students and experts from different disciplines to explore the limits of planet Earth and the need to address the points proposed in the 2030 Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals SDGs). Over 2.5 days, participants are able to choose from 20-30 interdisciplinary courses, including field trips and meetings with experts from different fields, depending on the topics addressed, participatory activities and group work.

The educational programmes of the House of Sustainability, including the Alpine Seminar, aim to provide students and the general public with the knowledge and tools necessary to understand sustainability in its various dimensions and to promote the culture of sustainable development. By nurturing the next generation of sustainability leaders and promoting innovative solutions, the House of Sustainability is an example of how universities can play an active role in collaborative sustainability education with experts and local communities.



Figure 16: Picture by Giovanni Pellegri.

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MSc Sustainable Business Development, FHNW

The MSc in Sustainable Business Development is a trinational Master's programme offered by the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, the University of Applied Sciences Offenburg (Germany) and EM Strasbourg Business School (France). Situated at the intersection of business, technology and sustainability, this interdisciplinary programme aims to empower students to become change agents and lead companies towards a more sustainable future. The first cohort will start in autumn 2024.

The programme recognises sustainability as a global issue that transcends borders. It draws on the combined strengths of each partner university in business, technology and environmental studies to provide a comprehensive, multidisciplinary education. Students are exposed to different perspectives and methodologies, enhancing their ability to develop innovative solutions to global sustainability challenges while deepening their understanding of international sustainability practices. Located in the Upper Rhine Valley, the proximity of the partner universities reduces the environmental impact of the programme.

A key feature of the programme is its collaborative design, involving a wide range of stakeholders from different countries. Leading industry experts, academics and sustainability advocates have all contributed to its development. With 50% of the curriculum dedicated to hands-on project work, including student-led initiatives and internships with established companies, students gain practical experience that addresses real-world challenges. In addition, individual mentoring programmes support students' development and prepare them for leadership roles in their future careers.

In summary, this master's programme offers an immersive, multilingual, multinational and multidisciplinary journey that combines academic rigour with practical application across borders. It prioritises individual student development and integrates the diverse expertise of different stakeholders to enable students to lead sustainable change in business, technology and beyond. Graduates can look forward to promising career opportunities in various sectors, including corporate sustainability roles, environmental consultancy, non-profit organisations and academia, with the possibility of PhD studies.



Figure 17: Picture by Jörg Wombacher

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Plurale Ökonomik Zürich, Universität Zürich

Plurale Ökonomik Zürich is a student association at the University of Zurich that promotes a diverse and inclusive approach to economics. Founded during Sustainability Week 2017, the association advocates for the integration of heterodox economics into the economics curriculum. The student association emphasises the importance of considering a variety of economic perspectives to address the complex and multifaceted challenges of the modern world.

Plurale Ökonomik Zürich organises semester events for students on heterodox economic approaches, including reading circles, panel discussions and film screenings. Most events are based on the knowledge of invited experts and peer-to-peer learning, with the aim of providing a broad overview of pluralist economic theories. These activities provide a platform for exchanging ideas, debating policy implications and collaborating on research projects that address the pressing sustainability challenges of our time. In addition to its public activities, the association is involved in departmental matters concerning the development of economics courses and the involvement of students in departmental decisions. Among other things, Plurale Ökonomik Zürich lobbies every semester to ensure that modules from other departments can be credited to students at the Faculty of Economics.

An outstanding initiative of Plurale Ökonomik Zürich is the lecture series "Pluralism in Economics", which takes place every autumn semester. This course is designed to introduce students to the wide range of economic theories and methodologies and to encourage them to engage critically with different schools of thought. The three content-related sessions in the 2023 autumn semester contrasted mainstream theories with heterodox approaches in the areas of feminist vs. gender, ecological vs. environmental, and decolonising vs. development economics. The course, led by Prof. Dina Pomeranz, was designed to actively engage students with the theories presented through expert input, discussion and case studies.

By advocating a pluralistic approach to economics, Plurale Ökonomik Zürich plays a crucial role in shaping the future of economics education. Its initiatives are instrumental in promoting a more holistic and sustainable understanding of economics. Through its work, the association is making significant strides towards a more diverse and sustainability-oriented academic environment.



Figure 18: Picture by Karin Pfeifer.

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Enterprise for Society (E4S) Center, Université de Lausanne, IMD, EPFL

The Enterprise for Society (E4S) Centre is a research and action centre created by the School of Management of the University of Lausanne (HEC-Lausanne), IMD and EPFL, under the auspices of its College of Management of Technology. E4S aims to inspire and activate the transition to a resilient and inclusive economy within planetary boundaries, taking into account the opportunities and challenges posed by scientific and technological change. The Centre's activities focus on the fields of technology, engineering, economics and management, and explores developments in education, research and outreach in these disciplines.

An important aspect of E4S's mission is its commitment to higher education. The Centre coordinates the Master's programme in Sustainable Management and Technology, an interdisciplinary degree that combines the perspectives of technology and business to promote sustainable development. The course is open to students with a bachelor's degree in engineering or management/economics and an interest in sustainability. With a compulsory internship in the fourth semester, the industry-oriented degree prepares students for real-world challenges and opportunities in business, management and technology, and provides them with an interdisciplinary understanding of sustainability issues.

The E4S Centre has developed a transformative educational initiative called "Transformative Projects" as part of the E4S-SMT (Sustainable Management and Technology) Master's curriculum. The Transformative Projects challenge students to apply their learning to real-world problems, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Teams of 3-4 students from different disciplines work together on a topic provided by a company, NGO or public institution, to propose new perspectives or solutions that can have the potential to transform an industry or societal practices. These transformative projects are a cornerstone of the E4S educational philosophy, which emphasises experiential learning and interdisciplinary collaboration. By engaging students in hands-on projects, E4S not only enhances their educational experience but also empowers them to become agents of change in their future careers. The E4S Centre's efforts in higher education and its transformative projects are crucial in cultivating a new generation of leaders committed to building a sustainable and inclusive future.



Figure 19: Presentation of Transformative Projects' students work to companies in January 2024.

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Thoughts on the way: Transformative Learning for a liveable future

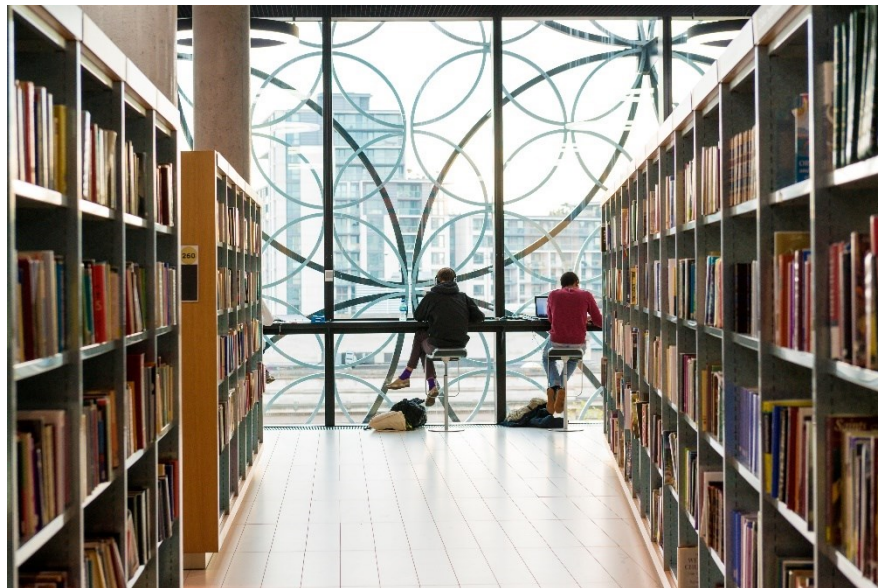
Prof. Dr. Silja Graupe, President of Hochschule für Gesellschaftsgestaltung

Globally, a generation of young people is emerging whose real prospects for the future appear increasingly bleak in light of the multiple crises of our time. Older generations, too, are experiencing irreparable fractures in their worldviews, self-conceptions, and life experiences. Narratives of progress centred on purely monetary growth or the notion of continually optimising individuals are becoming increasingly less convincing, particularly in the face of the undeniable and far-reaching impacts of climate change, with its radical ecological, economic, and social implications. A key aspect of this is that while individuals are often addressed as highly responsible, they simultaneously experience a growing sense of disorientation and powerlessness in an increasingly complex world. This situation leads to tensions both within individuals and across society. Yet, it is primarily the younger generations who will have to navigate the social, ecological, and economic transformations ahead—and who, according to many empirical studies, would be willing to do so—if only they were encouraged and empowered to do so at schools and universities.

Unlike most educational institutions, the University for Socio-Economic Design (Hochschule für Gesellschaftsgestaltung HfGG) has, for many years, been explicitly dedicated to exploring how such encouragement and empowerment can be realised, particularly in the academic domain. Indeed, the university was founded with this mission in mind, and the mandate of Transformative Learning is embedded in its very DNA. As an innovative teaching and learning laboratory—or more accurately, as a comprehensive universe of thinking and acting—the university collaborates with its students to develop, test, and evaluate teaching and learning approaches within its own degree programmes and far beyond.

In what follows, I would like to offer a motivating outlook on how education for sustainable development in higher education can evolve in the future, using the concept of Transformative Learning that we have specifically developed for (academic) teaching. What principles can this type of education follow, and what values will guide it, if we all muster the courage to initiate fundamental processes of change together?

Transformative Learning was originally developed by Jack Mezirow in the 1970s to facilitate the transformation of perspectives. According to Mezirow, individuals should be allowed to learn in a way that enables them to consciously reflect upon and alter their own assumptions, worldviews, and mindsets. In this manner, transformation can occur not only on a technical or rational level but also on a deeper level of consciousness (the "cognitive institutions"). At HfGG, we are convinced — and demonstrate how it is indeed possible — that Transformative Learning should not be confined to this form of personality development, which focuses primarily on individual thinking. Rather, it can and should also initiate and support learning processes that reach deeper levels of consciousness (imagination, meaning-making, emotions, etc.). Furthermore, our approach aims to enable the transformation of collective interpretative frameworks (paradigms, modes of thinking, collective meanings) as well as the shaping of social practices and habits within complex environments.



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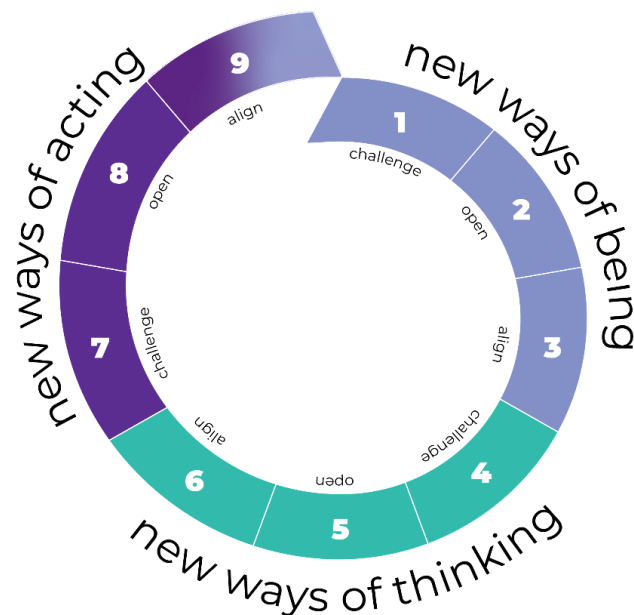
It is crucial, therefore, that these enabling processes are no longer divided into distinct 'competency containers' nor aligned with traditional disciplinary boundaries—especially not those of economics. Instead, the entirety of teaching should be oriented towards addressing problems, seeking solutions, and tackling contemporary challenges and future visions that genuinely interest and motivate students. In doing so, three areas—'New ways of being,' 'New ways of thinking' and 'New ways of acting'—are each addressed in a targeted and comprehensive manner. This approach allows for 'deep transformations' in which the disruptions of existing self-conceptions due to the crises of the world are accompanied, reflected upon, and captured. New perspectives and possibilities are revealed, and impulses for assuming responsibility and developing personal attitudes are set in motion. Together with our alumnus Dr Lukas Bäuerle, I have prototypically developed the 'Spiral of Transformative Learning,' which can inspire all of you to integrate further reforms and innovations into your universities and into your teaching.

The mere fact that we have been able to develop a Bachelor's degree and two Master's degrees in Germany based on this concept, and that these programmes have been accredited without any difficulties—indeed, with much praise and recognition—is more than remarkable. This circumstance in combination with the impressive influx of highly committed and intellectually strong students, should encourage you all to break through the limits of imagination that we still hold in our minds when we think of 'university teaching'. It ought to inspire you to tear down the boundaries of the (often only perceived) constraints of an academic landscape characterised by resistance to reform and by fear of change. Let us finally focus on the motivation and creative power of the next generations, along with our own unwavering commitment to making thoughtful, pluralistic, and well-founded contributions to overcoming the pressing challenges of our time. Let these motives become the guiding stars of our engagement in higher education!

For further information, visit:

www.hfgg.de

www.silja-graupe.de



1. Endure disorientation
2. Open oneself to new meaning
3. Develop a new compass for action
4. Deconstruct old paradigms
5. Generate pluralistic knowledge
6. Create visions and strategies
7. Interact in a complex world
8. Experiment with transition pathways
9. Act responsibly

A photograph of a forest stream. The water flows over several large, moss-covered rocks. Sunlight filters through the dense forest canopy, creating bright highlights on the water and the surrounding green foliage. The scene is peaceful and natural.

Part B: Individual departments and study programs

Individual departments

The following tables show how sustainability is strategically integrated and promoted at each of the institutions surveyed. We start with the results for the universities in alphabetical order of location, followed by the universities of applied sciences, also in alphabetical order of location, with the intercantonal network universities and the Swiss Distance Learning University coming last.

In order to visualise the results of the yes/no/planned questions as simply as possible, a traffic light system is used. As can be seen in Table 4, yes-answers are labelled green - i.e. green means that the surveyed instrument is institutionalised. Planned responses are yellow and no responses are red. A grey button is an indication that there was no response or that the respondent did not consider the question applicable to their department.





Yes	
Planned	
No	
No answer/ not applicable	

Table 4: A traffic light system visualises the results for each department.

It is striking how differently the departments of various universities approach sustainability issues strategically. There are no instruments that are institutionalised at all universities, and no instrument that is not institutionalised at any university. There is the greatest consensus on the question of department-wide guidelines for the integration of sustainability issues in research collaborations with practice partners: with the exception of one department, no department has such a guideline. However, it is unclear from this survey whether there are university-wide policies that make departmental policies obsolete.

University of Basel: Faculty of Business and Economics




Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 5: Responses from Faculty of Business and Economics of University of Basel.

University of Bern: Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences










Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 6: Responses from Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences of University of Bern.

Université de Fribourg: Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences






Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 7: Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences, Université de Fribourg.

Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL): Collège du Management de la Technologie



Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 8: Responses from Collège du Management de la Technologie, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL).

UNIL-EPFL-IMD: Collège du Management de la Technologie


Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 9: Responses from Collège du Management de la Technologie, UNIL-EPFL-IMD

Université de Neuchâtel: Faculty of Economics and Business










Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 10: Responses from Faculty of Economics and Business, Université de Neuchâtel.

University of St.Gallen: School of Economics and Political Science










Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 11: Responses from School of Economics and Political Science, University of St.Gallen.

University of St. Gallen: School of Management









Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 12: Responses from School of Management, University of St. Gallen.

University of Zurich: Department of Economics










Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 13: Responses from Department of Economics, University of Zurich.

Bern University of Applied Sciences: Business School










Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 14: Responses from Business School, Bern University of Applied Sciences.

University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons: Department Entrepreneurial Management










Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 15: Responses from Department Entrepreneurial Management, University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons.

Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts: School of Business










Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 16: Responses from School of Business, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts.

Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW): School of Management and Law

Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 17: Responses from School of Management and Law, Zurich University of Applied Sciences.

Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences (OST): Management Department

Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 18: Responses from Management Department, Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences (OST).

University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO): Business, Management and Services


Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 19: Responses from University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO).

Swiss Distance University of Applied Sciences (FFHS, SUPSI affiliated school): Departement Wirtschaft und Technik










Strategy/ guiding principles for sust. development at faculty/ dep. level	
Strategic sust. guidelines based on a university-wide strategy	
Strategic principles and measures aligned w. int. standards/ principles	
Committee coordinating the integration of sust. (incl. measures)	
Guidelines for integrating sust. content into teaching	
Incentives for integrating sust. development into teaching	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. teaching w. practice partners	
Cross-departmental guidelines for embedding sust. in research	
Guidelines for integrating sust. into collab. research w. practice partners	

Table 20: Responses from Departement Wirtschaft und Technik, Swiss Distance University of Applied Sciences (FFHS).

Individual study programmes

The following section visualises the results of every analysed study programme individually. The visualisation is first divided into the four disciplines Business Administration, Economics, Banking & Finance, and combined study programmes, including Business and Economics topics. The study programmes are then divided into their level (Bachelor/Master), with Bachelor programmes shown first. Within these levels, the universities are shown first, sorted alphabetically. The universities of applied sciences are then also shown in alphabetical order.

The scaling in the visualisations corresponds to the calculations used for the analysis of both sustainability topics and teaching and learning approaches (see tables 2 and 3).

For every discipline in which more than 14 sustainability topics were analysed, only the 14 most frequent criteria are depicted.

Sustainability topics

- Strong embedding
- Moderate embedding
- Marginal embedding
- no symbol No embedding

Teaching & learning approaches

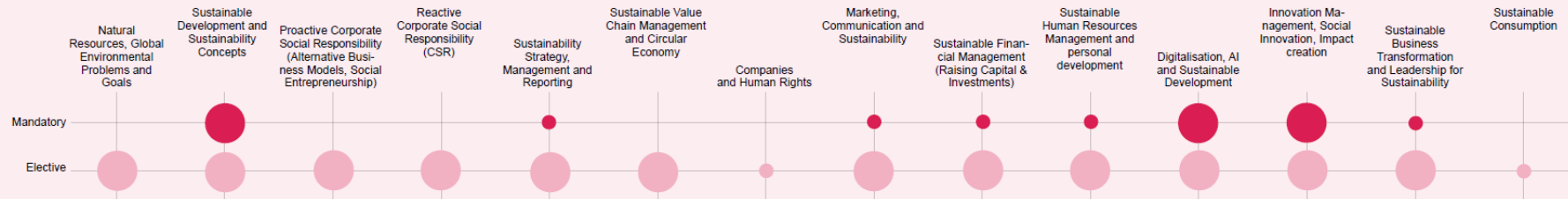
- ✳ Strong embedding
- ✳ Moderate embedding
- ✳ Marginal embedding
- no symbol No embedding



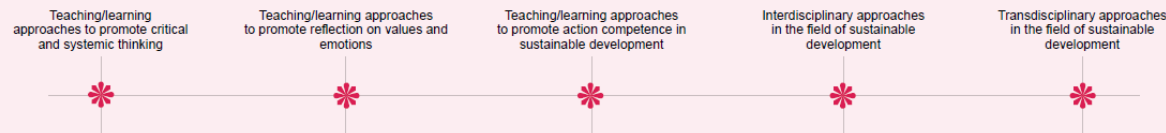
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BA in Betriebswirtschaftslehre Universität St. Gallen

Sustainability-related topics



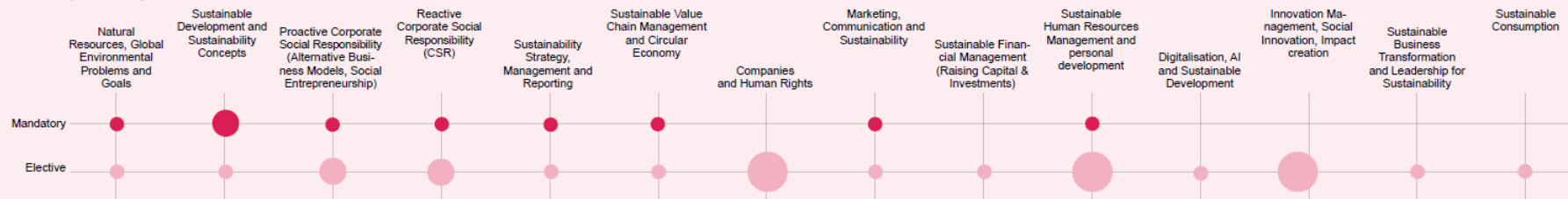
Teaching and Learning approaches



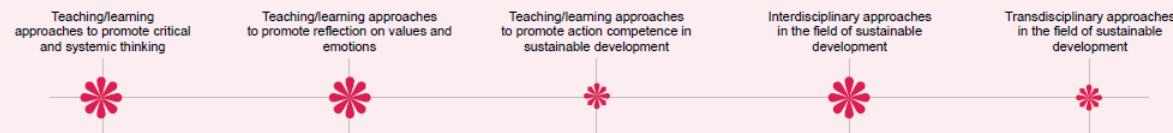
Sustainability-focused specializations:
Integrative Sustainability Management

BSc in Betriebsökonomie Berner Fachhochschule (BFH)

Sustainability-related topics



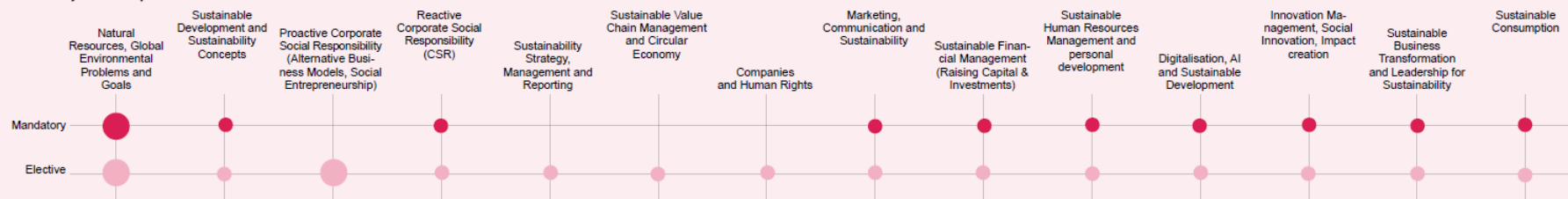
Teaching and Learning approaches



Sustainability-focused specializations:
Sustainable Business

BSc in International Business Administration Berner Fachhochschule (BFH)

Sustainability-related topics



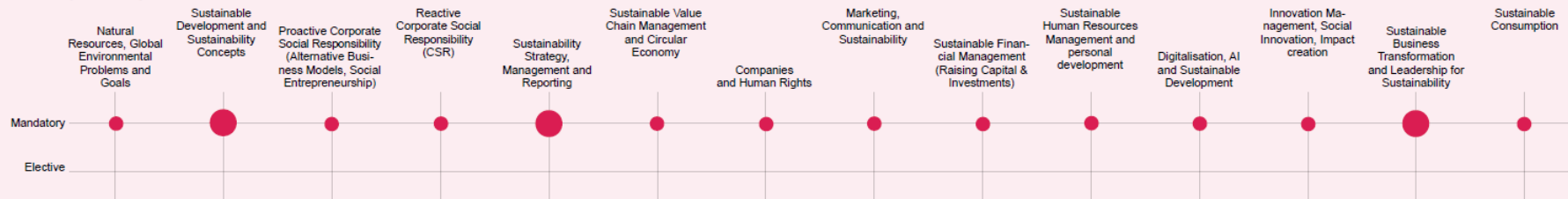
Teaching and Learning approaches



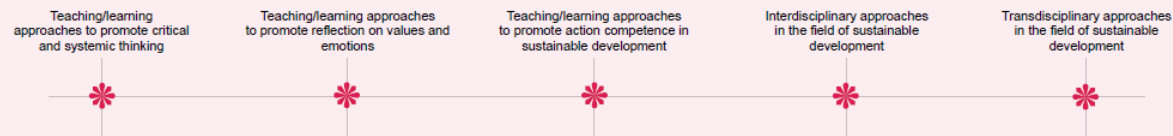
Sustainability-focused specializations:
Sustainable Business

BSc in Betriebsökonomie Fernfachhochschule Schweiz (FFHS) *

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches

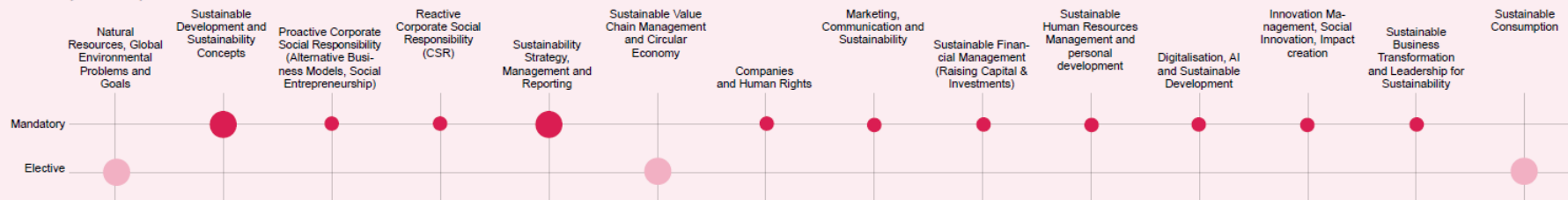


* SUPSI affiliated school

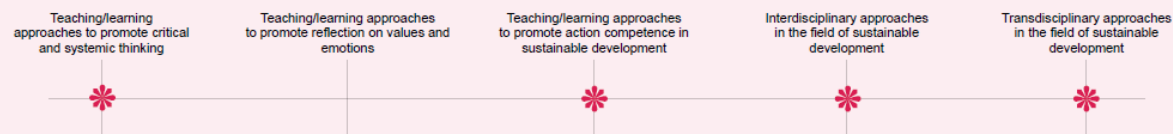
Sustainability-focused specializations:
Leadership and Sustainability
Management

BSc in Betriebsökonomie Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz (FHNW)

Sustainability-related topics

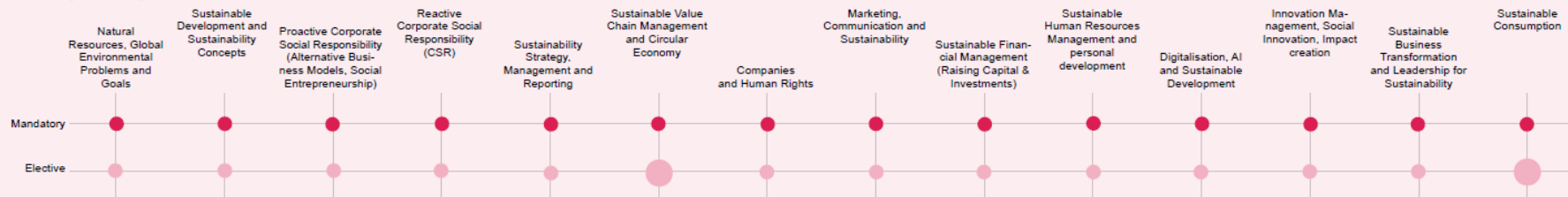


Teaching and Learning approaches

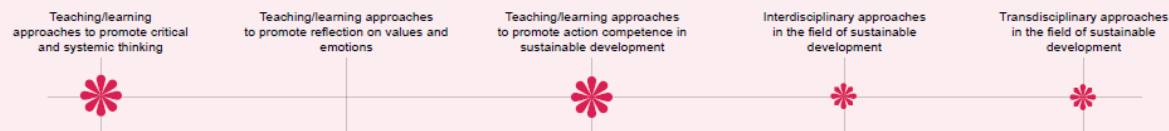


BSc in Business Administration (International Management) Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz (FHNW)

Sustainability-related topics

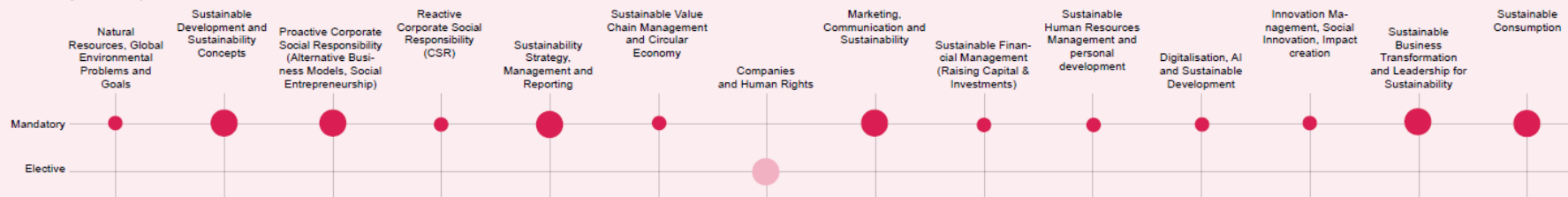


Teaching and Learning approaches

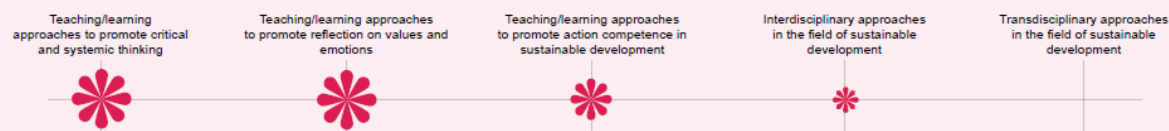


BSc in International Business Management (trinal) Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz (FHNW)

Sustainability-related topics

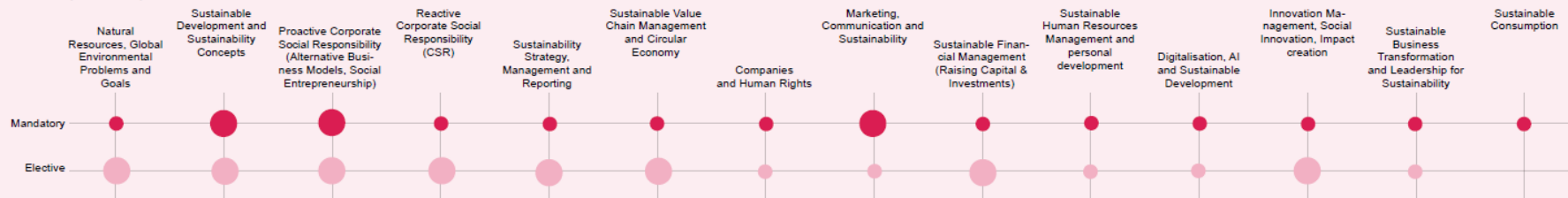


Teaching and Learning approaches

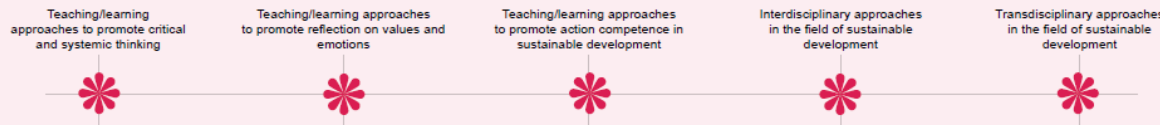


BSc en Economie d'entreprise / in Betriebsökonomie Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale (HES-SO)

Sustainability-related topics



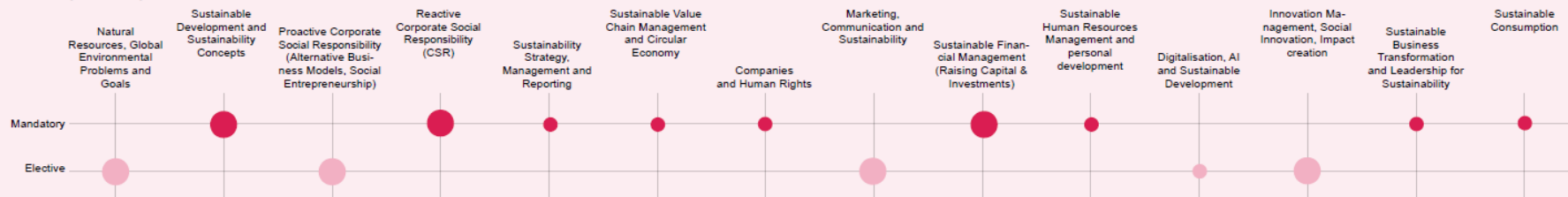
Teaching and Learning approaches



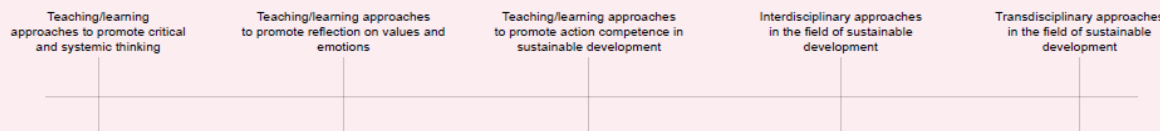
Sustainability-focused specializations:
Management durable

BSc in International Business Management Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale (HES-SO)

Sustainability-related topics

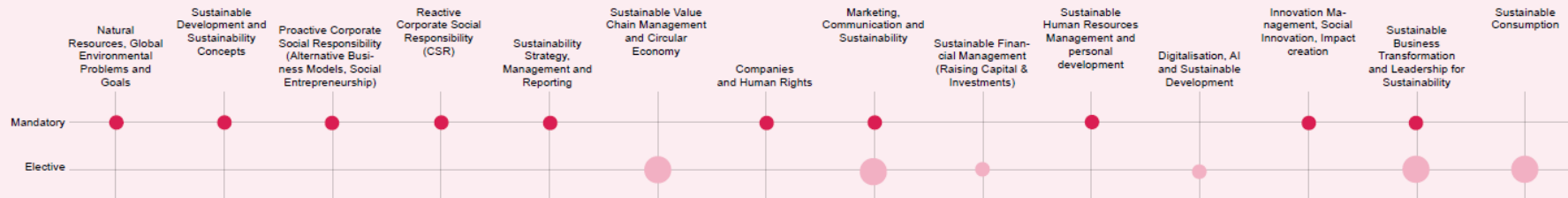


Teaching and Learning approaches

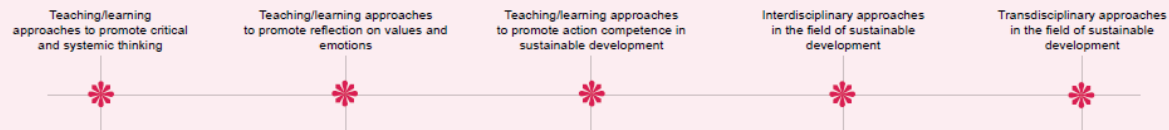


BSc in Betriebsökonomie Hochschule Luzern (HSLU)

Sustainability-related topics

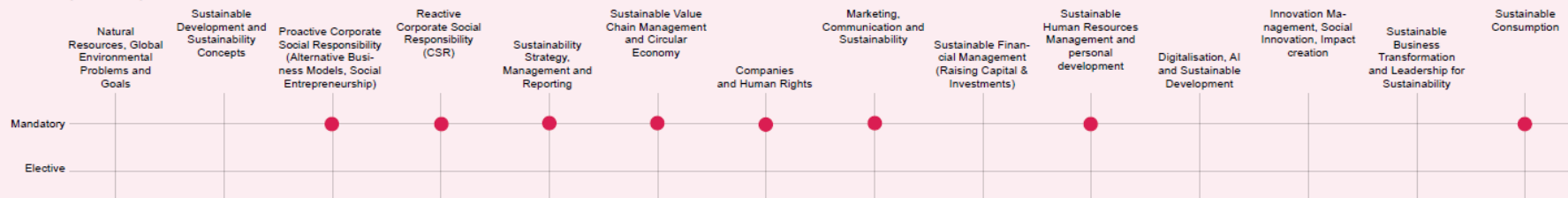


Teaching and Learning approaches

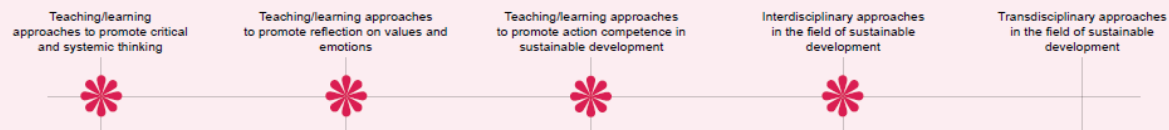


BSc in Business Psychology Hochschule Luzern (HSLU)

Sustainability-related topics

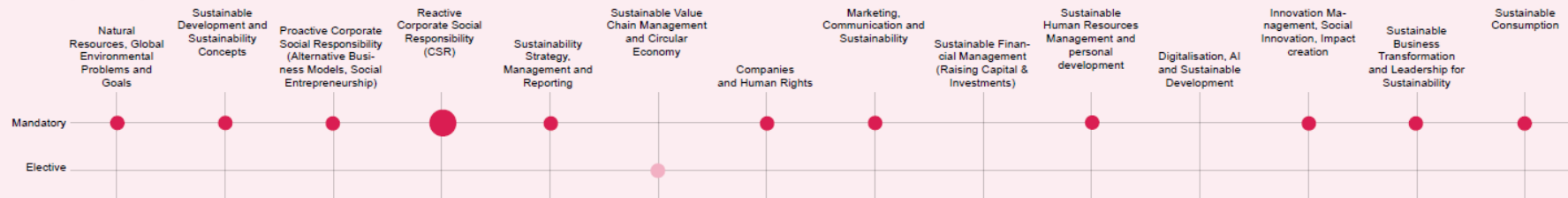


Teaching and Learning approaches

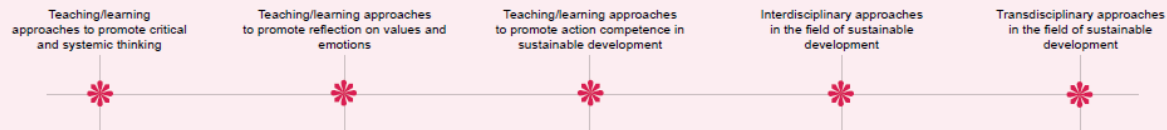


BSc in International Business Administration Hochschule Luzern (HSLU)

Sustainability-related topics

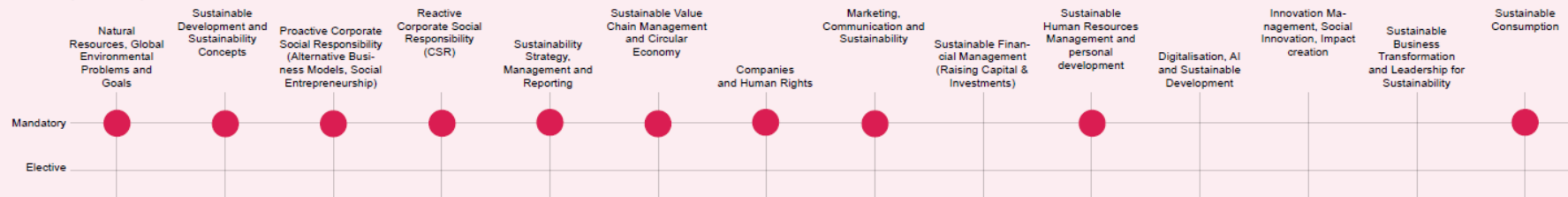


Teaching and Learning approaches

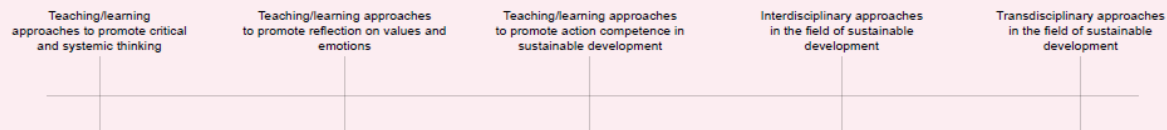


BSc in International Sustainable Tourism Hochschule Luzern (HSLU)

Sustainability-related topics



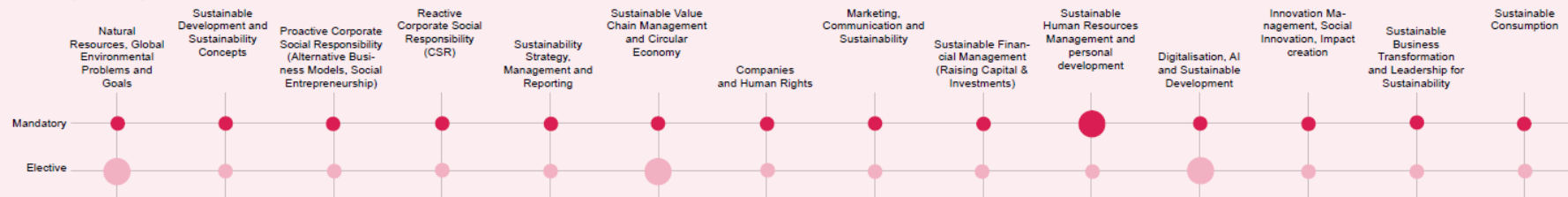
Teaching and Learning approaches



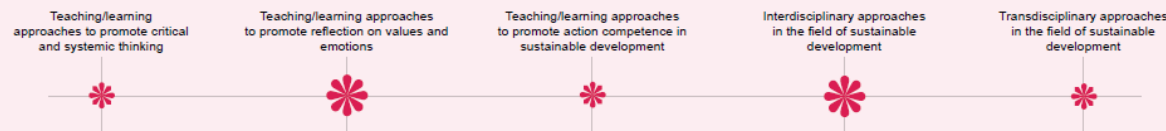
Sustainability-focused specializations:
Sustainable Tourism

BSc in Betriebsökonomie Ostschweizer Fachhochschule (OST)

Sustainability-related topics

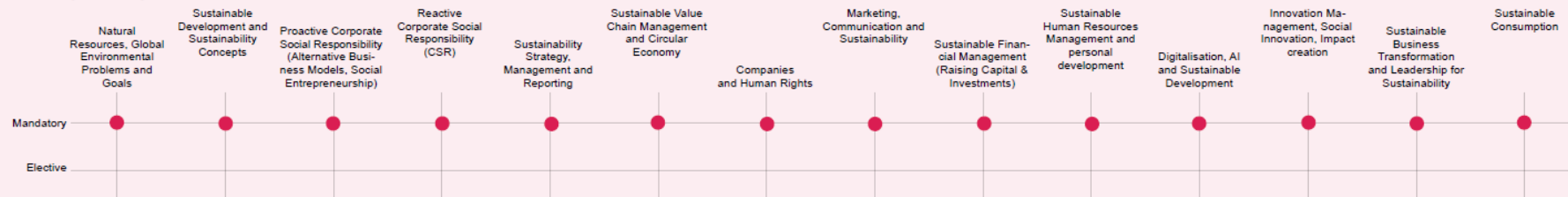


Teaching and Learning approaches

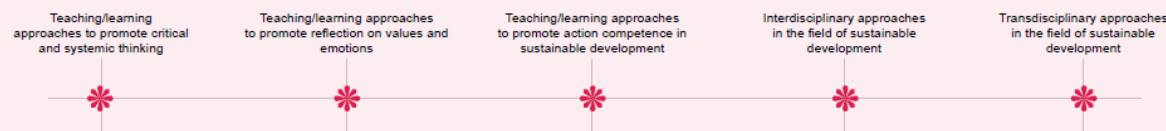


BSc in Leisure Management Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana (SUPSI)

Sustainability-related topics

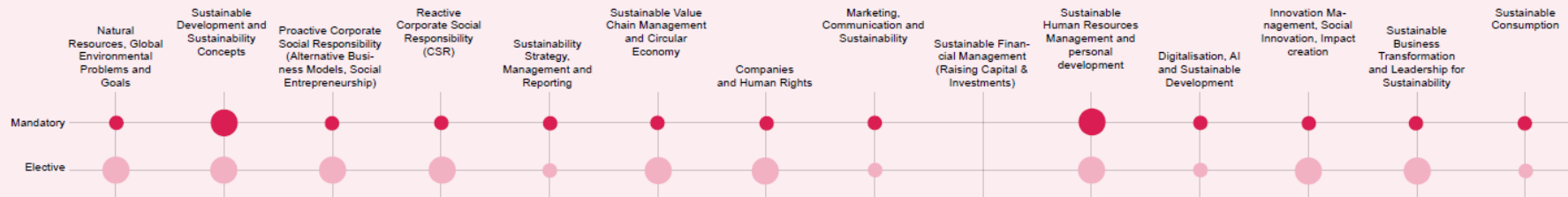


Teaching and Learning approaches

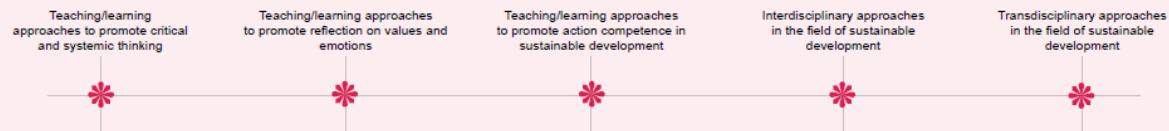


BSc in Betriebsökonomie Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (ZHAW)

Sustainability-related topics

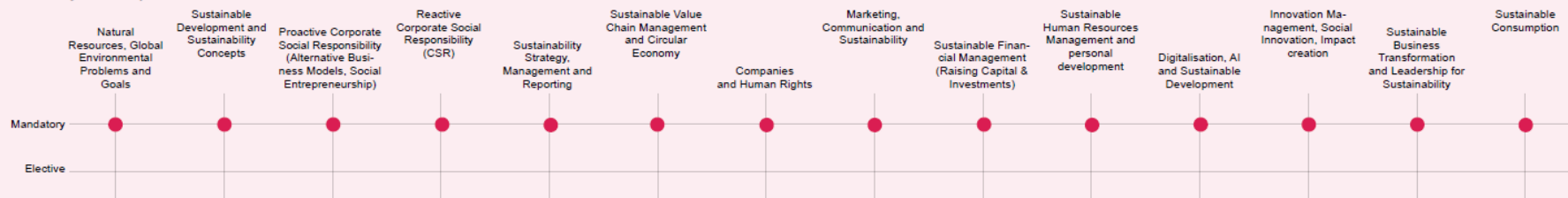


Teaching and Learning approaches

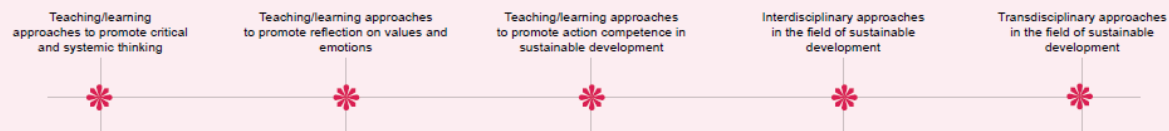


BA in International Management Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (ZHAW)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



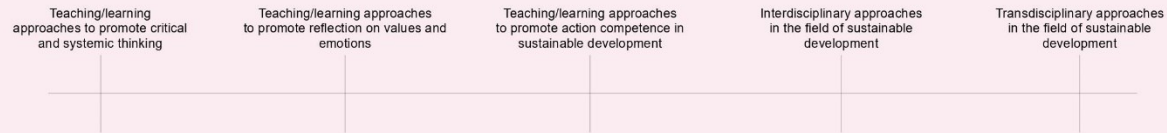
Sustainability-focused specializations:
Corporate Responsibility; Managing Circular Economy; Managing the Bioeconomy; Business in the Climate Crisis

MSc in Corporate Communication Università della Svizzera italiana

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



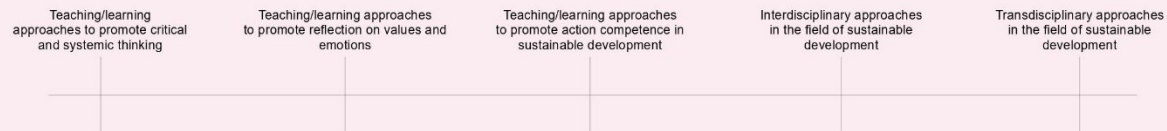
Sustainability-focused specializations:
Corporate Social Responsibility and the
Common Good

MSc in Marketing and Transformative Economy Università della Svizzera italiana

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



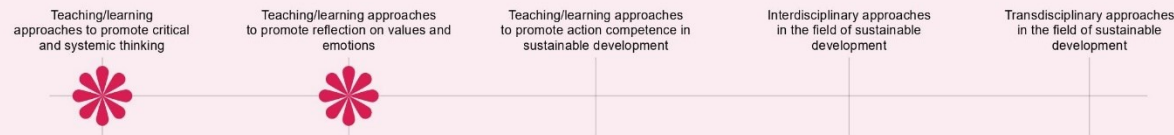
Sustainability-focused specializations:
Corporate Social Responsibility and the
Common Good

MSc in Business and Technology Universität Basel

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MA in Business and Law Universität Bern

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc in Betriebswirtschaftslehre Universität Bern

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MA in Accounting and Corporate Finance Universität St. Gallen

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MA in Management, Organisation & Kultur Universität St. Gallen

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



Sustainability-focused specializations:
Change Management and Organizational Development; Communication, Media and Culture; Strategic Management and Entrepreneurship

MA in Marketing Management Universität St. Gallen

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



Sustainability-focused specializations:
Core Elective - Clean Energy Management

MA in Strategy and International Management Universität St. Gallen

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MA in Betriebswirtschaftslehre Université de Fribourg

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MA in Marketing Université de Fribourg

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MA in International and European Business Université de Fribourg

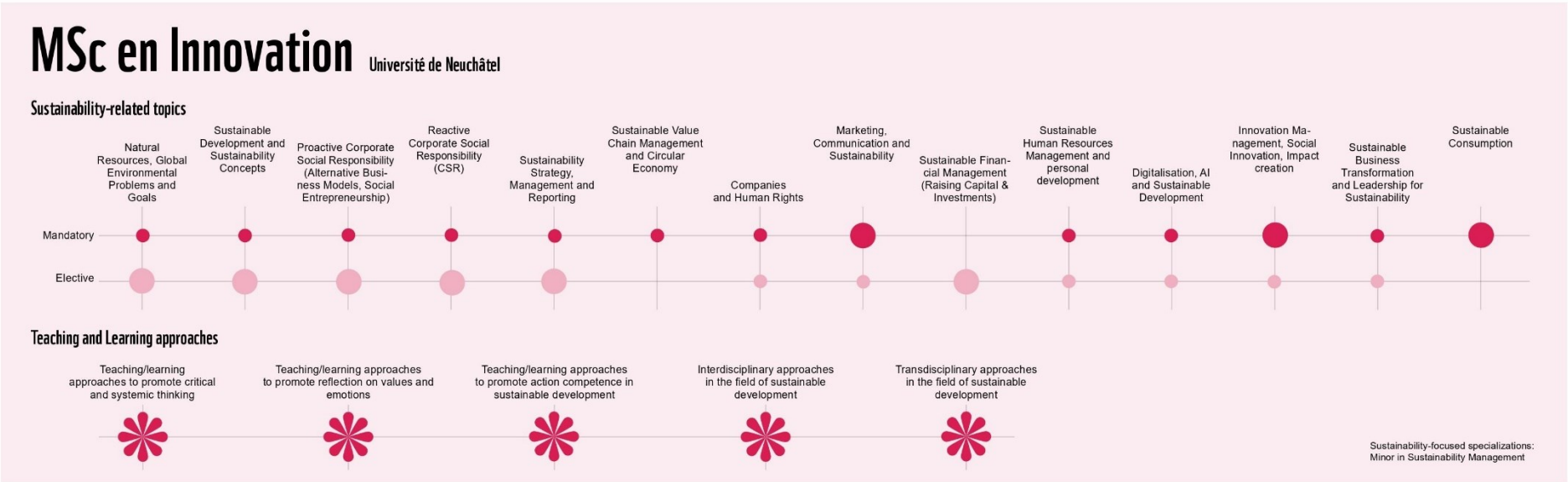
Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



Sustainability-focused specializations:
Module „NPO and Sustainable Management“ with a choice of more than 20 modules



MSc in Business Administration Berner Fachhochschule (BFH)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc in Digital Business Administration Berner Fachhochschule (BFH)

Sustainability-related topics

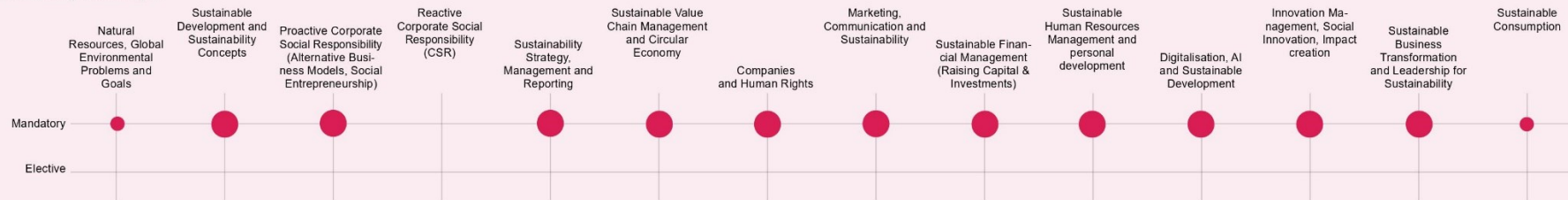


Teaching and Learning approaches

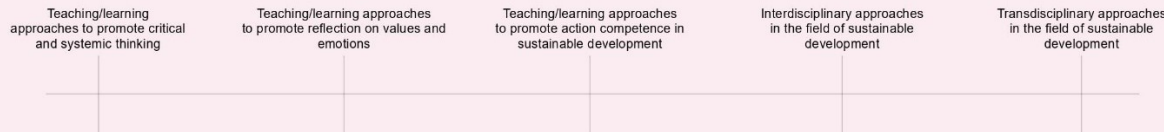


MSc in Betriebsökonomie in Sustainability & Circular Innovation Fernfachhochschule Schweiz (FFHS) *

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



* SUPSI affiliated school

Sustainability-focused specializations:
Sustainability & Circular Management;
Innovation Management

MSc in Sustainable Business Development (trinational) Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz (FHNW)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc in Business Administration

Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale (HES-SO)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc in Business Administration

Hochschule Luzern (HSLU)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches

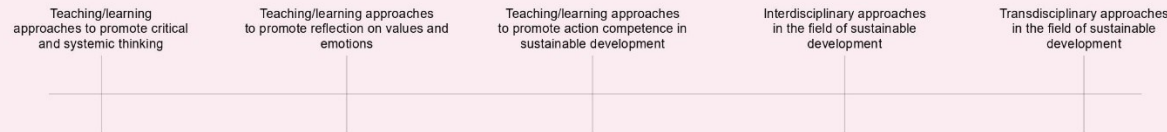


MSc in Logistik und Supply Chain Management Hochschule Luzern (HSLU)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



Master Business Administration Ostschweizer Fachhochschule (OST)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



Sustainability-focused specializations:
Corporate/Business Development

MSc in Business Administration

Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana (SUPSI)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc in Accounting and Controlling

Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (ZHAW)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc BA - Major Health Economics & Healthcare Management Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (ZHAW)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc BA - Major Innovation and Entrepreneurship Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (ZHAW)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc BA - Major Marketing Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (ZHAW)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc BA - Major Unternehmensentwicklung Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (ZHAW)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc in Circular Economy Management Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (ZHAW)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches

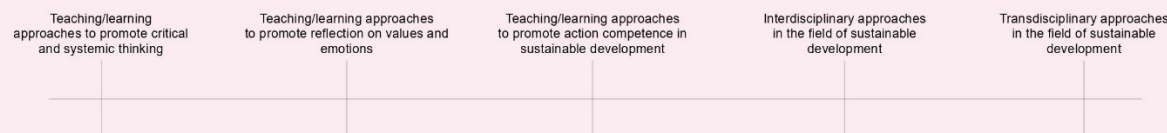


MSc in International Business Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (ZHAW)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc in Management and Law Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (ZHAW)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



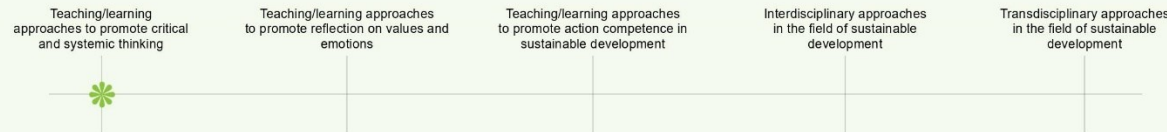
Sustainability-focused specializations:
Applied Research

BSc in Volkswirtschaftslehre Universität St. Gallen

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



BA in Volkswirtschaftslehre Universität Zürich

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc in Economia e politiche internazionali

Università della Svizzera italiana

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



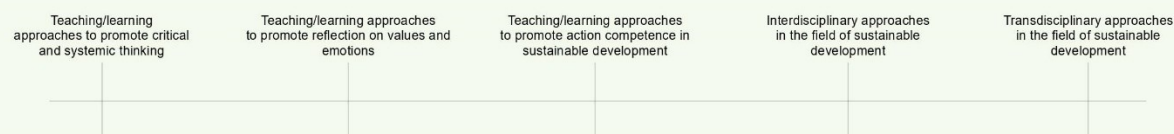
MSc in International and Monetary Economics

Universität Basel & Universität Bern

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MA in Business Innovation Universität St. Gallen

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



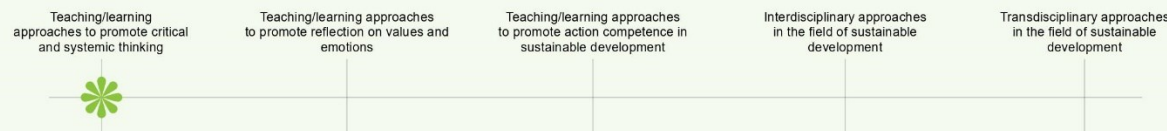
Sustainability-focused specializations:
Managing Climate Solutions (MaCS)

MA in Econometrics Universität St. Gallen

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



Sustainability-focused specializations:
Public Policy

MA in Quantitative Economics and Finance Universität St. Gallen

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MA in Economics/Volkswirtschaftslehre Universität Zürich

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MA in Volkswirtschaftslehre Université de Fribourg

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



Sustainability-focused specializations:
Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility

MSc in Applied Economics Université de Neuchâtel

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



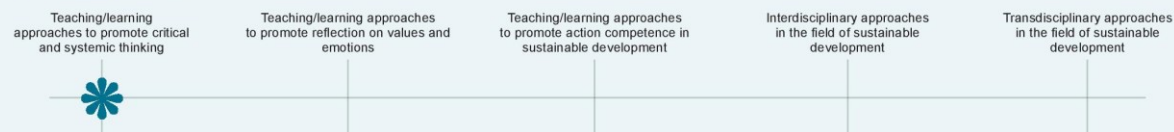
Sustainability-focused specializations:
Major in Energy and Environmental Policy

MSc in Finance Università della Svizzera Italiana

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc in Finance and Money Universität Basel

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MA in Banking and Finance Universität St. Gallen

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



Sustainability-focused specializations:
Managing Climate Solutions (MaCS)
certificate

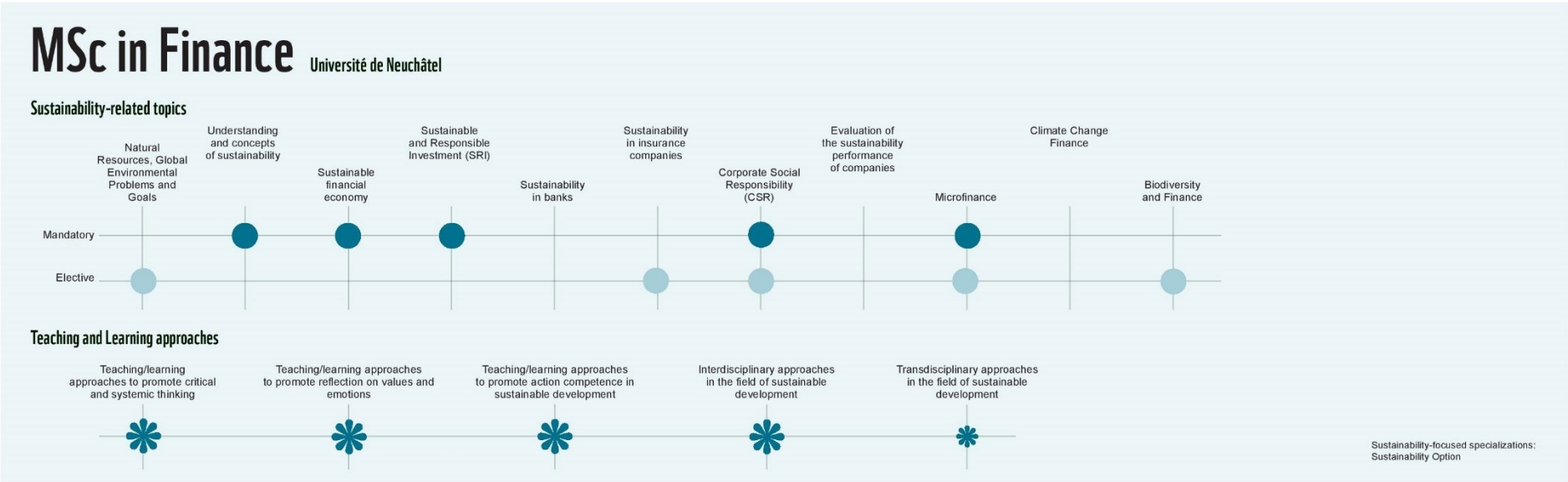
MA in Accounting and Finance Université de Fribourg

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



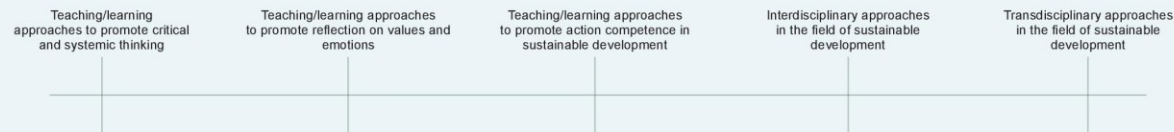


MSc in Banking and Finance Hochschule Luzern (HSLU)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc in Banking and Finance Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (ZHAW)

Sustainability-related topics

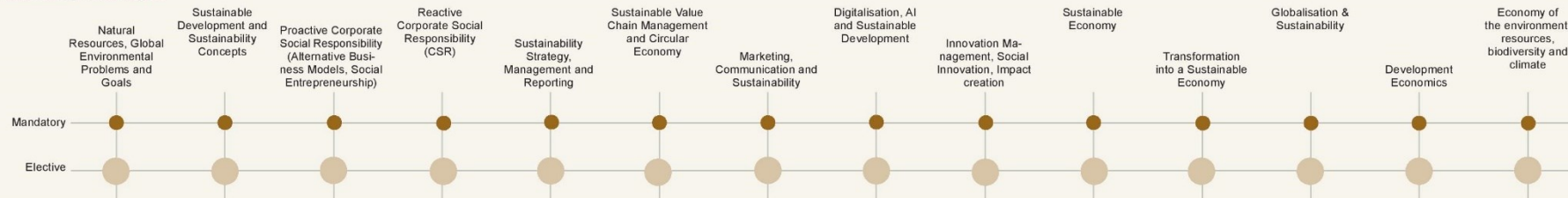


Teaching and Learning approaches

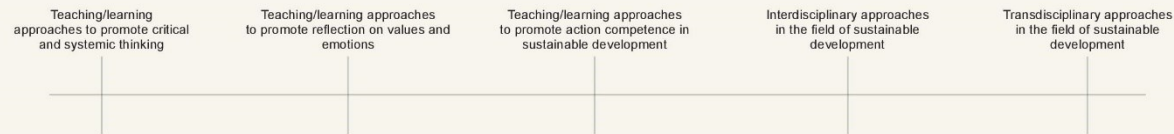


BA in Business and Economics Universität Basel

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



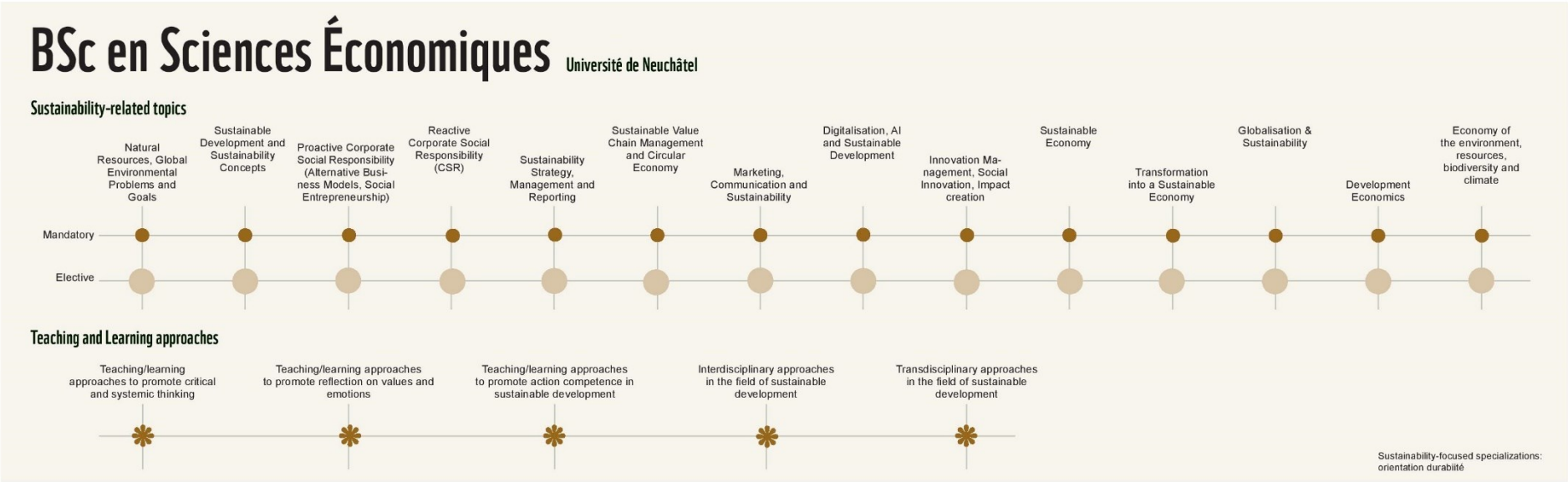
BA in International Affairs and Governance Universität St. Gallen

Sustainability-related topics



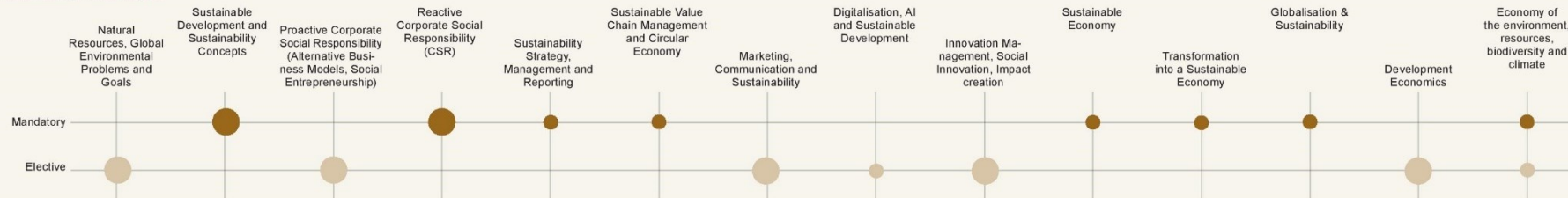
Teaching and Learning approaches





BSc in International Business Management Haute Ecole Spécialisée de Suisse Occidentale (HES-SO)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



BSc en Tourisme Haute Ecole Spécialisée de Suisse Occidentale (HES-SO)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



Sustainability-focused specializations:
Energy Management, Manager 21

BSc in Mobility, Data Science and Economics Hochschule Luzern (HSLU)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



BSc in Economia Aziendale Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana (SUPSI)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MSc in Business and Economics Universität Basel

Sustainability-related topics



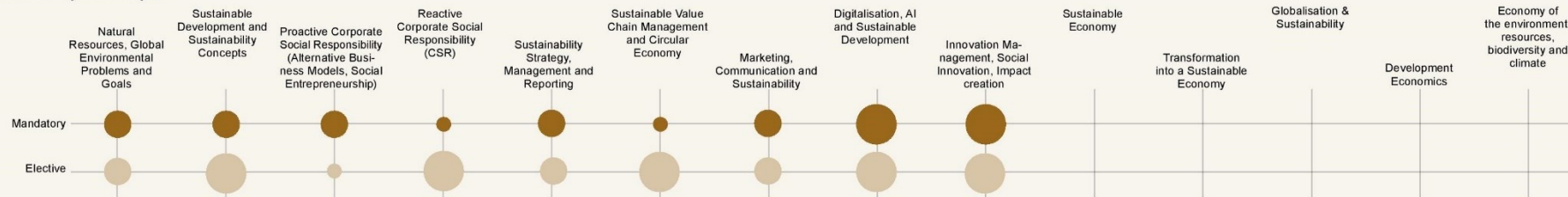
Teaching and Learning approaches



Sustainability-focused specializations:
International Business, Trade, and the Environment

MSc in Business and Economics Universität Bern

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



MA in International Affairs and Governance Universität St. Gallen

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



Sustainability-focused specializations:
Sustainability and Development

MSc en Développement International des Affaires Université de Neuchâtel

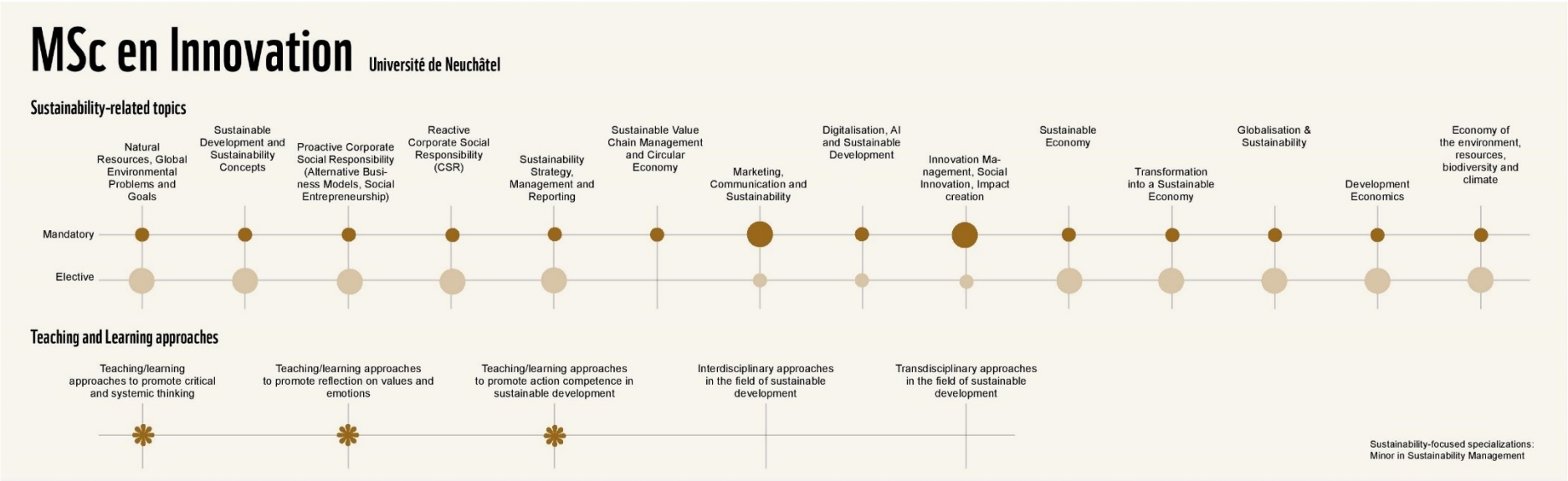
Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches



Sustainability-focused specializations:
Minor in Sustainability Management



MSc in Circular Innovation and Sustainability Berner Fachhochschule (BFH)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches

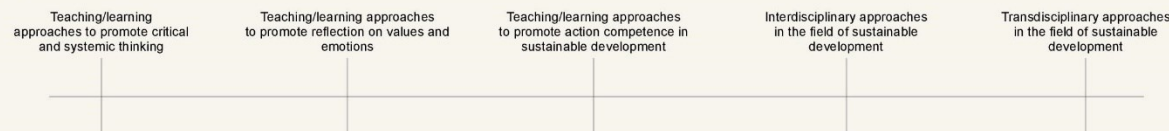


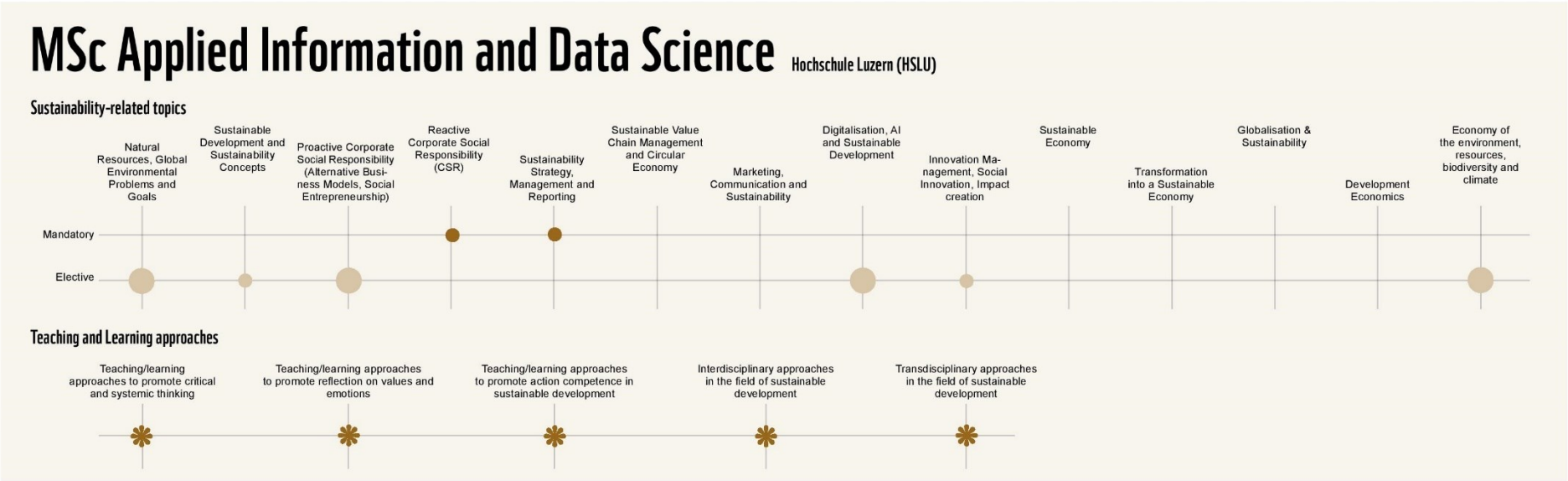
MSc in International Management Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz (FHNW)

Sustainability-related topics



Teaching and Learning approaches





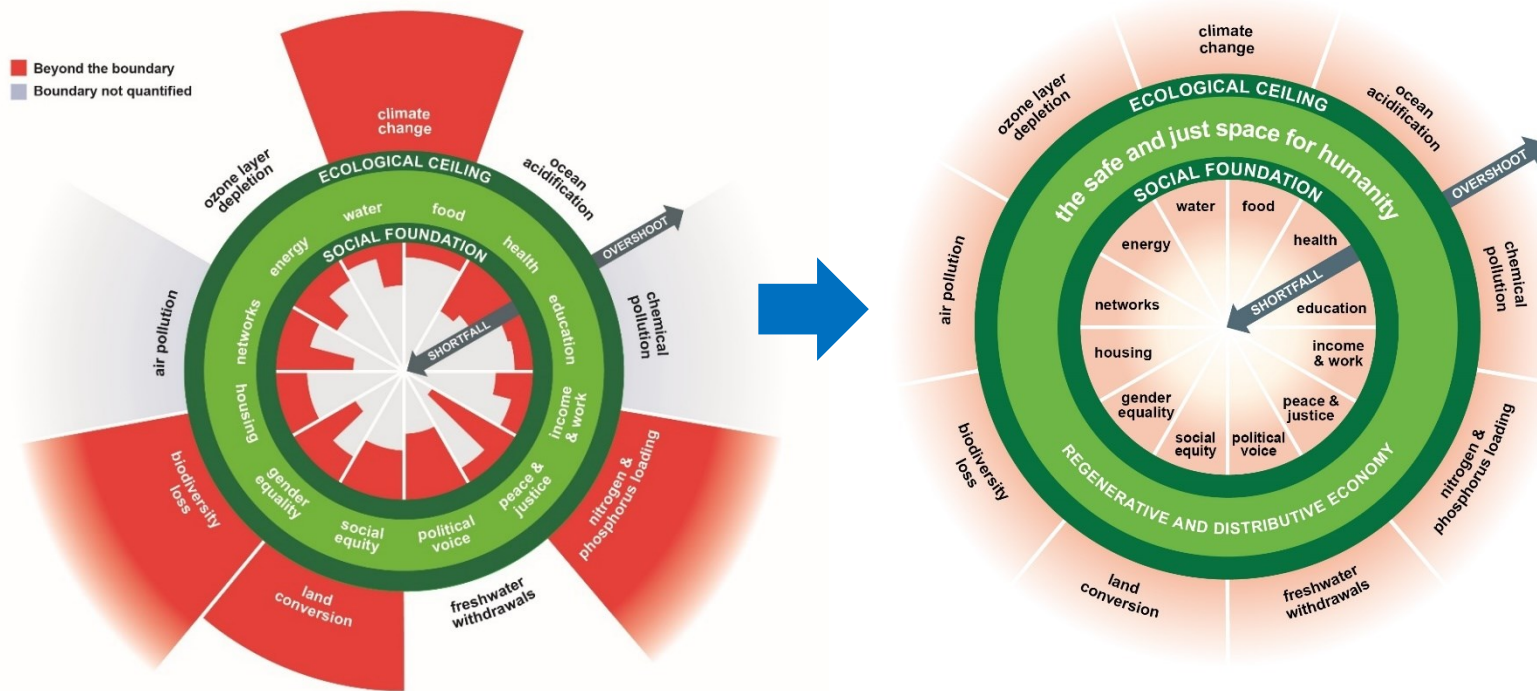


Part C: Basics and appendix

Basics

From Transgressed Planetary Boundaries to Doughnut Economics

The goal of a sustainable economy is illustrated by the donut model: the outer limit is formed by the planetary boundaries, which have now been exceeded in several dimensions. The inner boundary is formed by legitimate human needs, some of which have not been met - particularly in the Global South. Our task is to manage our economy in such a way that we operate in a safe and just space - for current and future generations.



Transgressed Planetary Boundaries and Doughnut-Model (Johan Rockström et al. (2009) and Doughnut-Model by Kate Raworth)

Embedding sustainability in academia and the role of deans

The analytical model of Center for Higher Education Policy Studies shows the five key elements for embedding sustainability in academia - with a focus on the important role of deans.

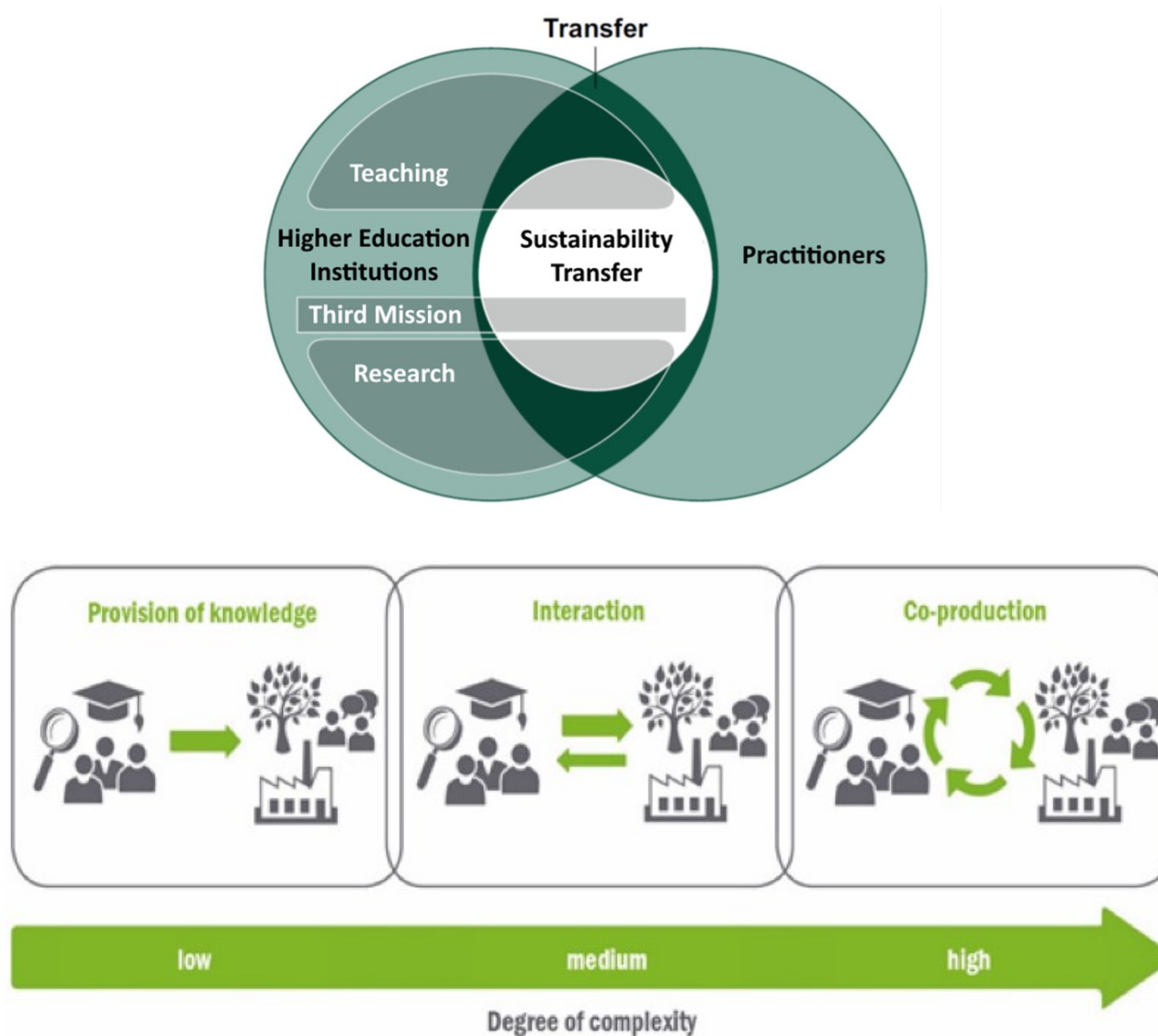


Analitical Framework ([Center for Higher Education Policy Studies, Enschede \(2021\): Embedding sustainability in academia: Deans as change makers. Literature Review](#))

Sustainability transfer and third mission

Sustainability transfer can have different focuses: in teaching, research or the third mission (promotion of sustainable development in practice).

Different levels of cooperation with practice partners are possible. The greatest impact can be achieved with co-design/co-production. However, this also involves the most complexity and requires the most resources.



Understanding of Sustainability Transfer (Demele U. et al. (2021): Sustainability Transfer as a Concept for Universities in Regional Transformation—A Case Study. Sustainability (MDPI)

Questionnaires

Questionnaires study programmes

Section	Questions/Texts/Buttons	Answer options	Comments
Intro	<p>Dear Directors of Studies,</p> <p>Economic policy, market structures, corporate strategies, and the organization of value chains all have major influence on global resource consumption and thus offer great opportunities for an economic and social transformation towards sustainable development. Economic sciences have a central role to play in shaping a sustainable economy: the anchoring of sustainability-relevant topics, mindsets and approaches in teaching, research and transfer serves as an important driver of transformation.</p> <p>WWF Switzerland and econcept AG are investigating all degree programs at Swiss universities with at least 50% economics to obtain a well-founded overview of the anchoring of sustainable development in ecoscience study programmes in Switzerland. The results will be summarised in a report and published in the summer.</p> <p>We would like to invite you, as the representative of your degree program, to take part in our survey. Please complete a separate questionnaire for each programme. It will take approximately 60 minutes to complete the questionnaire.</p> <p>Please complete the survey to the best of your knowledge and belief by 01 March 2024. The survey can be completed by different people: The latest version of the survey can be saved and sent via an automatically generated link to the person who is primarily responsible for completing the survey.</p> <p>Before answering the questionnaire, please read the supplementary document provided by WWF with all the necessary definitions and key words on relevant topics and methods. The survey must be treated confidentially and only forwarded to employees of your university who are authorised to complete the survey as representatives of your university and/or to verify the answers.</p> <p>Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ethan Gertel, project manager at econcept AG, at ethan.gertel@econcept.ch.</p> <p>Many thanks and best regards,</p> <p>WWF Switzerland and econcept AG</p>		

Section	Questions/Texts/Buttons	Answer options	Comments
Definition	<p>Our understanding of sustainability</p> <p>The terms Sustainability and Sustainable Development are used interchangeably in this document and in the survey. Ecological, social and economic dimensions are important for sustainable development – with respect to local, national, regional and global circles as well as current and future generations. Furthermore, a broad understanding of sustainability encompasses technological, cultural, psychological and philosophical aspects and perspectives.</p>		
General Information	<p>Important: By clicking the "Save" button at the bottom right of the page, the status of the survey will be saved so that you can resume it at a later date or pass it on to colleagues for them to continue. After saving, the specified contact person will receive an e-mail with an automatically generated link to access the latest version of the questionnaire.</p>		
	<p>First name and surname</p> <p>E-Mail *</p> <p>Function *</p>		
	<p>As a representative of my higher education institution, I hereby declare that I will answer the questions to the best of my knowledge and belief.</p> <p>Furthermore, I hereby confirm that I shall only forward the questionnaire to authorised individuals. The circle of authorised individuals only includes employees of my university who are either responsible for answering a question or for verifying the answers provided.</p>		
	Please select your university and your department/school		
	Please select your study program		
	Average number of students per year		
	Please provide the names of the sustainability-focused specializations offered in your program – for more rows, click on the button "Add specializations" below		
	Name of sustainability-focused specialization	name sustainability-focused specialization here	
	+ Add specialization		
Sustainability	<p>Sustainability-focused courses/modules</p> <p>Please list all courses/modules which focus on sustainability topics (i.e. >50% sustainability-related content):</p>		
Scope and size	Please provide further information for each course/module		

Section	Questions/Texts/Buttons	Answer options	Comments
	Course/module Total No. of ECTS Average No. of students per year		
Teaching and learning approaches	Please indicate, which teaching and learning approaches are applied in the courses/modules	Teaching/learning approaches to promote critical and systemic thinking Teaching/learning approaches to promote reflection on values and emotions Teaching/learning approaches to promote action competence in sustainable development** Interdisciplinary approaches in the field of sustainable development Transdisciplinary approaches in the field of sustainable development	
Relevance of sustainability-related topics	Which sub-discipline does your degree programme belong to?	Business Administration Economics Business Administration and Economics Banking & Finance	
	To what extent does the degree programme focus on the following topics? Please answer for each mandatory and/or elective course/module	Main focus of mandatory course/module Important focus of mandatory course/module Marginal focus of mandatory course/module Main focus of elective course/module Important focus of elective course/module Marginal focus of elective course/module	
Measures and outlook	What measures have you implemented in the last three years to integrate sustainable development into the degree programme?		

Section	Questions/Texts/Buttons	Answer options	Comments
	What important strategic, operational or curriculum-related measures are planned for the next three years?		
	What sustainability-focussed courses/modules are being planned?		
	Where do you see the greatest need for support to further integrate sustainable development topics and approaches into the degree program? (multiple answers are possible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Content-related competences of the lecturers –Didactic competences of the lecturers –Interdisciplinary competences of lecturers and researchers –Transdisciplinary competences of lecturers and researchers –More human resources –More financial resources More exchange to best practices –Other: _____ Not specified 	
	Do you have any final comments or suggestions?		

Questionnaires departments

Section	Questions/Texts/Buttons	Answer options	Comments
Intro	<p>Dear Deans,</p> <p>Dear Heads of Departments,</p> <p>Dear Survey Participants,</p> <p>Economic policy, market structures, corporate strategies, and the organisation of value chains all heavily influence global resource consumption and thus offer great opportunities for economic and social transformation to achieve sustainable development. The economic sciences play a central role in shaping a sustainable economy: anchoring sustainability-relevant topics, mindsets and approaches in teaching, research and transfer serve as an important driver in the transformation.</p> <p>WWF Switzerland and econcept AG are conducting a survey of responsible and relevant university departments to determine the extent to which sustainability is anchored in the departments, faculties and schools of economics at Swiss universities. Structures and processes at department, faculty or school level are of interest. The requirements and measures at university level will be surveyed in a further WWF study, which will be launched in March 2024.</p> <p>As a representative of your department or faculty, we would like to invite you to take part in our survey. Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. The aim of the survey is to obtain a well-founded overview of the anchoring of sustainable development in economic sciences in Switzerland. The results will be summarised in a report and published in the summer.</p> <p>Please complete the survey in full and to the best of your knowledge by 16 February 2024. The survey can be completed by different people: You can save your answers while completing the survey and send an updated version via an automatically generated link to the person who is primarily responsible for completing the survey. The survey must be treated confidentially and may only be forwarded to employees of your university who are authorised to complete and/or verify the answers to the questionnaire as representatives of your university.</p> <p>Before completing the questionnaire, please read the supplementary document provided by WWF containing the necessary definitions and keywords.</p> <p>Should you have any questions, please contact Ethan Gertel, project manager at econcept AG, at ethan.gertel@econcept.ch.</p>		

Section	Questions/Texts/Buttons	Answer options	Comments
	Many thanks and best regards, WWF Switzerland and econcept AG		
Definition	Our understanding of sustainability The terms Sustainability and Sustainable Development are used interchangeably in this document and in the survey. For sustainable development the ecological, social and economic dimensions are important – with respect to local, national, regional and global circles as well as current and future generations. Furthermore, a broad understanding of sustainability encompasses technological, cultural, psychological, and philosophical aspects and perspectives.		
General Information	Important: By clicking the "Save" button at the bottom right of the page, the status of the survey will be saved so that you can resume it at a later date or pass it on to colleagues for them to continue. After saving, the specified contact person will receive an e-mail with an automatically generated link to access the latest version of the questionnaire.		
	First name and surname E-Mail * Function *		
	As a representative of my higher education institution, I hereby declare that I will answer the questions to the best of my knowledge and belief. Furthermore, I hereby confirm that I shall only forward the questionnaire to authorized individuals. The circle of authorized individuals only includes employees of my university who are either responsible for answering a question or for verifying the answers provided.		
	Please select your university and your department/school		
Sustainability	Is there a sustainability strategy or guiding principles for sustainable development at faculty or department level?		
	What sustainability-related goals does your department or your faculty have?		
	Does your department or faculty have specific sustainability-related strategic guidelines that are based on a university-wide sustainability strategy?	Yes Partly No Not applicable	
	Does the department align its strategic principles and measures with an international sustainability standard or international principles (e.g., PRME)?	Yes No Planned Not applicable	
	What international standards or principles are those?		

Section	Questions/Texts/Buttons	Answer options	Comments
Resources	How many FTEs are available to the department for the implementation of sustainability-related measures or the compliance with sustainability-related guidelines?		
	What financial resources are available to the department for the implementation of sustainability-related measures or compliance with sustainability-related guidelines?		
	Has a specific committee been set up at departmental level to coordinate the integration of sustainability and the implementation of measures?		
Guidelines and incentives	Are there department-wide guidelines for integrating sustainability-related content specifically into teaching?		
	Please list those guidelines.		
	Are competences and experience in the field of sustainable development a selection criterion when appointing staff?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Always –Institute-specific –Professorship-specific –No criteria Not applicable 	
	Are there incentives for program directors or lecturers to integrate sustainable development into teaching?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Yes –No –Planned Not applicable 	
	What are those incentives and/or what incentives are planned?		
	What is the lecturers' knowledge of sustainable development and how are their ESD competences promoted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Training –Coaching/Mentoring –Resources for Self-Study –Internal Event –Other: _____ –They are not promoted Not applicable 	
	Are there department-wide guidelines specifically for integrating sustainability-related content into teaching in collaboration with practice partners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Yes –No –Planned –Not applicable 	
	Are there content-related, cross-departmental guidelines with regard to anchoring sustainability specifically in research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Yes –No –Planned Not applicable 	

Section	Questions/Texts/Buttons	Answer options	Comments
	Are there department-wide guidelines that specifically relate to the integration of sustainability-related content into research in collaboration with practice partners??	–Yes –No –Planned Not applicable	
	Do you have further remarks regarding this section?	–	
Institutes, programs and courses	Which institutes or departments specializing in sustainability exist in your department (at least 50% of activities in sustainability)?	–	
	Which sustainability-oriented Bachelor's or Master's degree programs in business and economics (at least 50% of the content in the area of sustainability) does your department offer?	–	
	What sustainability-focused courses or modules does your department offer that can be attended by students from different degree programs?	–	
	What sustainability-focused postgraduate programmes does your department offer?	–	
	What sustainability-focused training courses/modules does your department offer?	–	
Integration level and support	To what extent is the integration of sustainable development supported by internal departmental communication measures? (Multiple answers possible)	–Via department newsletters –Via internal e-mails –Via department campaigns –Via internal events, podium discussions, lectures –Other: _____ –There are no communication measures –Not applicable	
	Are there any other implemented, ongoing, or planned measures that you would like to mention?	–	
	Where do you see the greatest need for support to integrate sustainable development topics and approaches? (Multiple answers possible)	–Content-related competencies of lecturers –Didactical competences of lecturers –Interdisciplinary competencies of lecturers and researchers –Transdisciplinary competencies of lecturers and researchers –More human resources –More financial resources	

Section	Questions/Texts/Buttons	Answer options	Comments
		More exchange for best practices Other: _____ –Not applicable	
	Finally, do you have any more comments or any further information?	–	

Literature/Resources

[Demele U. et al. \(2021\): Sustainability Transfer as a Concept for Universities in Regional Transformation—A Case Study. Sustainability \(MDPI\)](#)
[HochN \(2020\): Nachhaltigkeitsgovernance an Hochschulen](#)
[HochN \(without year\): Bildung für Nachhaltige Entwicklung \(BNE\) in der Hochschullehre](#)
[Hoch N \(2021\): Transfer für nachhaltige Entwicklung an Hochschulen](#)
[SDSN \(2020\): Accelerating Education for the SDGs in Universities. A Guide for Universities, Colleges, and Tertiary and Higher Education Institutions](#)
[UNESCO \(2017\): Education for Sustainable Development Goals: learning objectives](#)
[UNESCO \(2018\): Issues and trends in education for sustainable development](#)
[DECODE Sustainability European Deans Council for Sustainable Development: Resources](#)
[Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative: Resources](#)
[DG HochN \(2022\): Sustainable Development by and with Universities: Recommendations for Action](#)
[Nachhaltigkeit an Brandenburger Hochschulen \(2024\): Designing future-oriented curricula. A practical guide for the curricular integration of higher education for sustainable development](#)
[Center for Higher Education Policy Studies, Enschede \(2021\): Embedding sustainability in academia: Deans as change makers. Literature Review](#)
[Netzwerk n: Good-Practice-Sammlung \(German\)](#)
[Sustainicum Collection: Teaching Resources](#)

Living Labs for Sustainability

[MIT Office of Sustainability](#)
[UBC SEEDS Sustainability Program](#)
[Université Grenoble Alpes - Campus en Transition](#)
[Universität Hamburg - Kompetenzzentrum Nachhaltige Universität](#)
[Universität Graz - RCE Graz-Styria \(Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development\)](#)
[University of Copenhagen - Sustainability Science Centre](#)
[Lund University – LUCSUS](#)
[University of Manchester](#)

International Networks

[GRLL Deans & Directors Cohort](#)
[DECODE Sustainability European Deans Council for Sustainable Development](#)

Imprint

Project lead: Simon Zysset, WWF Switzerland

Inspiring examples and graphics individual programmes: Mara Moos, WWF Switzerland

Methodology, survey, evaluation, feedback: econcept, Zurich

Graphics: Binkert Partnerinnen, Zurich

www.wwf.ch/economicsciences2024



Our Mission

Together, we protect the environment and create
a future worth living for generations to come.

WWF Switzerland

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