Unit:
Study Skills for Postgraduate Learning

Assignment Title:
Evaluating the case for integrating sustainability into the Higher Education Curricula

December 2014

Important Notes:
- Please refer to the Assignment Presentation Requirements for advice on how to set out your assignment. These can be found on the NCC Education Campus. Scroll down the left hand side of the screen until you reach Personal Support. Click on this, and then on Policies and Advice. You will find the Assignment Presentation Requirements under the Advice section.
- You must familiarise yourself with the NCC Education Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy and ensure that you acknowledge all the sources which you use in your work. The policy is available on Campus. Follow the instructions above, but click on Policies rather than Advice.
- You must complete the ‘Statement and Confirmation of Own Work’. The form is available on the Policies section of Campus. Scroll down the left hand side until you reach Personal Support. Click on this and then click on Policies and Advice.
- Please make a note of the recommended word count. You could lose marks if you write 10% more or less than this.
- You must submit an electronic copy to the NCC Education Campus (full instructions detailed at the end of this document). Media containing viruses, or media which cannot be run directly, will result in a fail grade being awarded for this module.
- All electronic media will be checked for plagiarism.

Marker’s comments:

Moderator’s comments:

Mark: Moderated Final
Mark:
Introduction and Aim

The aim of this assignment is to enable you to demonstrate your academic skills at post-graduate level, within a given research topic. In addition, you will demonstrate reflection upon the skills used to engage with this research topic in order to produce an academic essay. Submissions will be supported by evidence using the Harvard reference system.

Compulsory Contents

The assignment is 3000 words and consists of two key elements: an academic essay on a given topic that is supported by appropriate and correct references (1400 words) and a portfolio of professional practice (1600 words).

Assignment

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is a UK-based national and independent organisation which seeks to champion excellent learning and teaching in higher education via a number of practitioner (strategic, pedagogic and policy level) initiatives, student initiatives and projects. The HEA is highly regarded and many aspects of their strategic plan are embedded within the strategies of higher education institutions (universities) across the UK.

A current area of significant interest and activity relates to embedding sustainable development into the curricula. According to the HEA (2013):

“Our work on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) aims to help higher education institutions in the development of sustainability-literate graduates who have the skills, knowledge and experience to contribute to an environmentally and ethically responsible society.

Education for Sustainable Development is described by the United Nations as a means of ‘enabling students to develop the attributes, behaviours and skills needed to work and live in a way that safeguards ecological, social and economic wellbeing, both in the present and for future generations’. This can challenge traditional pedagogies, requiring a multi-disciplinary partnership approach across and between institutions.”

A recent report by the HEA, Student attitudes towards and skills for sustainable development 2013, found that over 80% of students surveyed believe sustainable development should be actively promoted and incorporated by UK universities.

HEA (2013), Student attitudes towards and skills for sustainable development, The Higher Education Academy, UK
Task 1 – 40 Marks
Academic Essay

You are required to effectively research the topic given in the assignment brief above to produce an academic essay on the topic below:

Consider why such a high percentage of students consider ESD to be an important part of the curricula and structure an argument to convince universities to embed ESD within their institutions. In addition, why do you think integrating ESD may challenge traditional pedagogies, as mentioned in the HEA quotation above?

The essay must demonstrate critical reading and writing, using a range of sources to demonstrate your research skills, which should be correctly referenced. Furthermore, the essay must be well presented, making use of appropriate structure to support arguments, so that meaning is conveyed effectively. The word count for this task is suggested to be 1400 words, excluding the reference list.

Task 2 – 50 Marks
Portfolio of Professional Practice

You are required to submit a portfolio demonstrating reflection of the skills that you have accumulated and exercised in Task 1. You must consider the skills that you have developed and used, and the extent to which they need further development. Self-reflection and honesty is key to this task. The portfolio must include the following aspects and has a suggested word count of 1600 words.

a) A concept map, outlining the interrelated dimensions forming structure to your research. (10 Marks)
b) A project/research plan outlining your plan to manage Task 1 – consider time allocated to research, evaluation and synthesis, and writing up. Clearly outline intended activities, time allocated and deadlines imposed for completion. (15 Marks)
c) A reflective journal, outlining your experiences whilst following your project plan – consider what skills you used, how they were used and if this was effective use. In addition, consider where you perhaps encountered problems and explain how you overcame them as part of the project management process. (15 Marks)
d) A skills audit – List the skills you feel you would need/like to develop further and consider how you might achieve this, taking into account your individual learning style. (10 Marks)

Task 3 – 10 Marks
Referencing
Marks will be awarded for correct referencing, making use of the Harvard reference system
Guidance
Complete all the tasks sequentially. Consult with your tutor if you are uncertain about any aspects of the assignment.

Submission Requirements
- A word-processed document containing all material for presentation, including the academic essay and portfolio of professional practice.
- Maximum word limit is **3000 words** (+/- 10%) not including the appendices.
- The document should be properly structured with a table of contents, bibliography (online and literature sources) and appendices (where necessary). Refer to the Assignment Presentation Requirements on Campus for more information. (See front cover.)
- Produce clear and specific reasoning and argument to justify answers.
- An electronic copy of the document must be submitted to NCC Education by email using this address: level7assessments@nccedu.com

Warning: all media must be virus free!
Media containing viruses, or media which cannot be run directly, will result in a FAIL grade being awarded for this module.

You must read and understand NCC Education’s policy on ‘Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism’.
You must complete the ‘Statement and Confirmation of Own Work’ form and attach the completed form to your assignment.