



The new area “Sustainable Development” in the General Professional Skills Courses



Vrije Universiteit Brussel
8th UNICA Green Workshop

Implementation of SDGs in Higher Education
21-23 March 2018

Agenda

- 1. Sustainability in teaching and research at FUB**
- 2. Courses related to the SDGs**
- 3. New area “Sustainable Development” in the General Professional Skills Courses (ABV)**
- 4. Current situation and next steps**

Sustainability in Teaching and Research

4,213 Courses in total*

153 with a focus on sustainability (4 %)

476 with a link to sustainability (11 %)

629 sustainability-related courses (15%)

1,546 Research Projects in total**

173 with a focus on sustainability (11%)

293 with a link to sustainability (19%)

466 sustainability-related courses (30%)

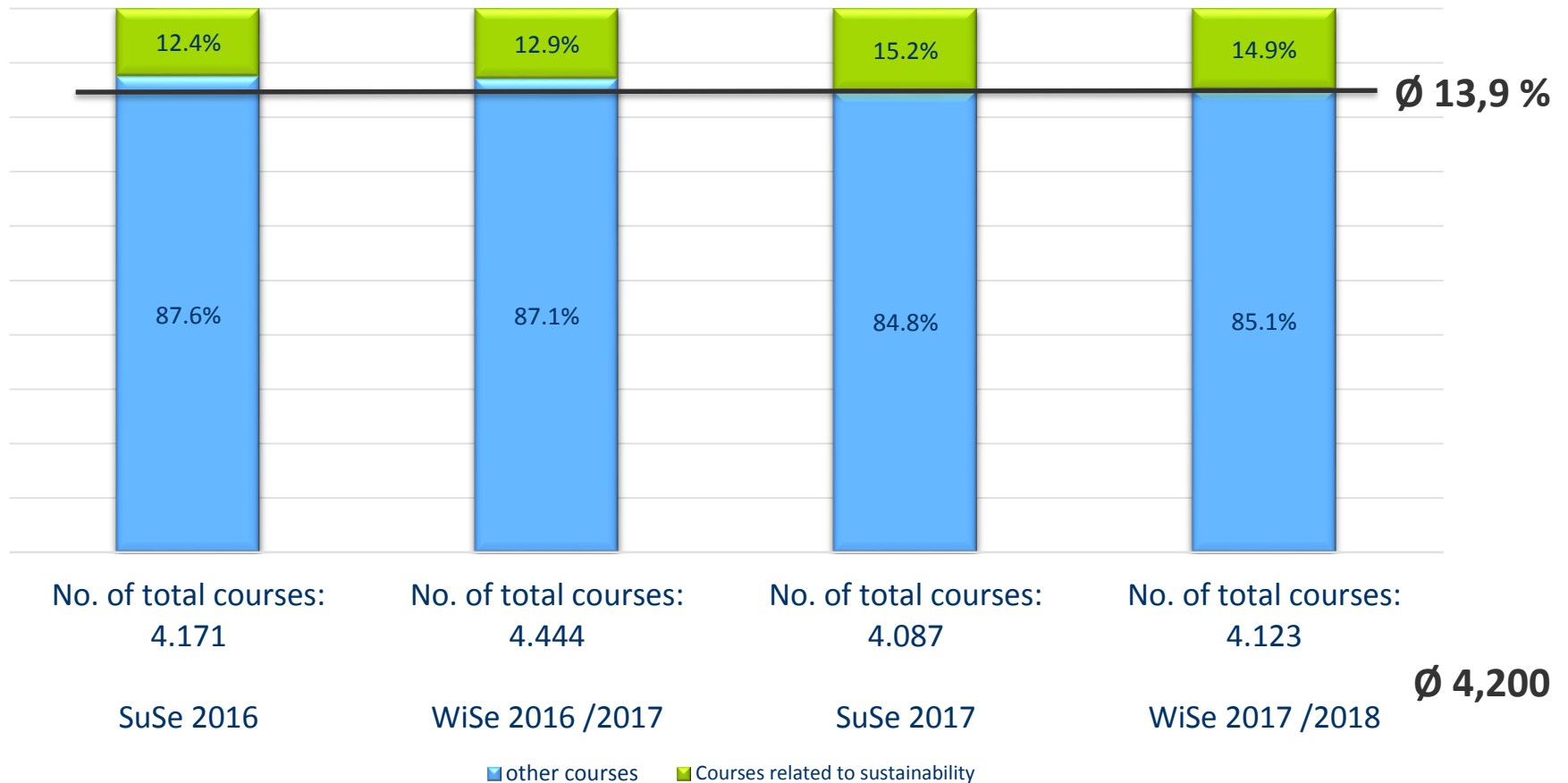
*) Winter term 2017/18

**) 2017

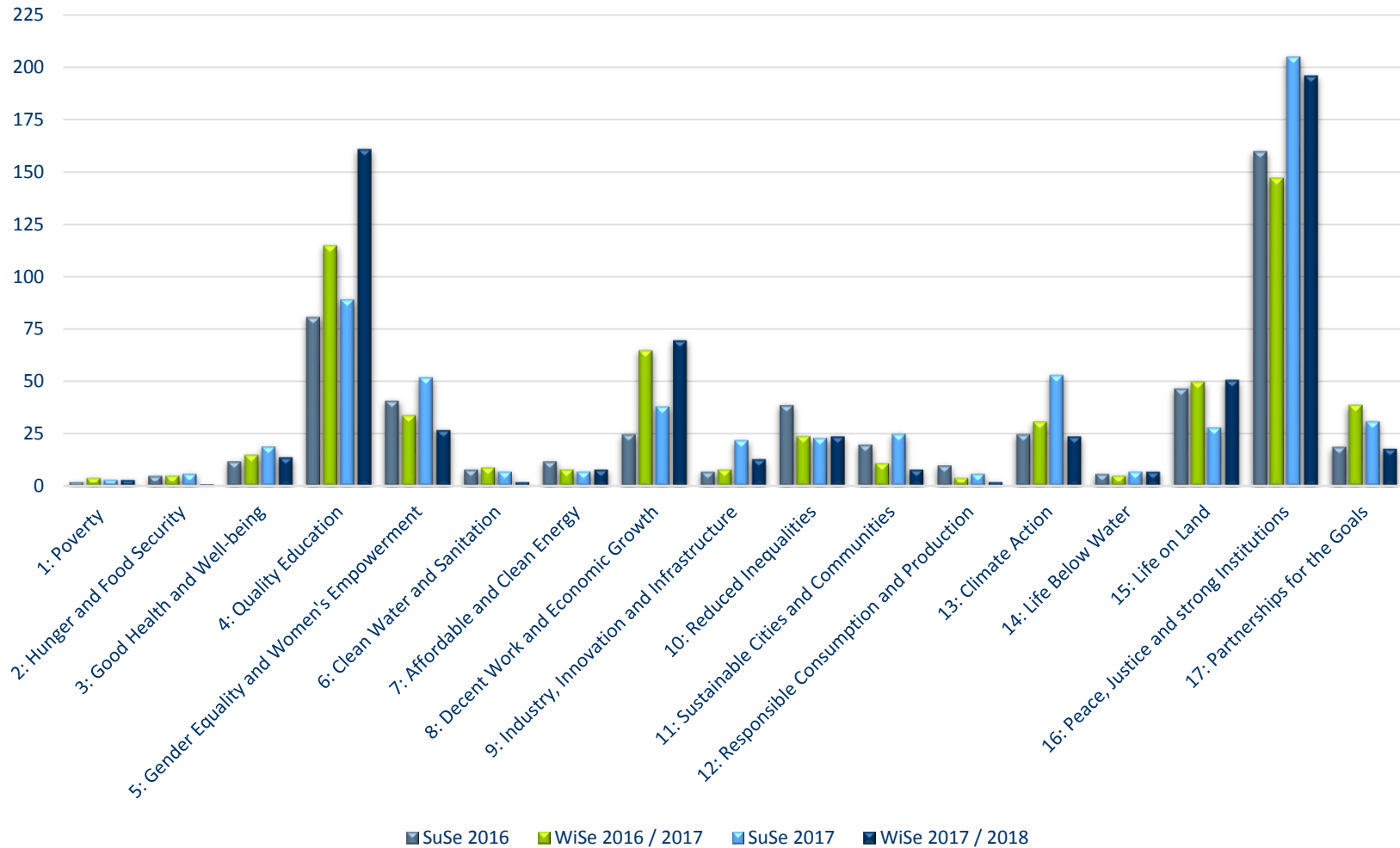
Criteria according to the Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating Systems (STARS) as part of AASHE, Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education

- PARTICIPATION POLICY: STEERING COMMITTEE WITH WORKING GROUPS TEACHING/ESD AND RESEARCH (since 2016)
- ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AREA *SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT* IN THE GENERAL PROFESSIONAL SKILLS COURSES (ABV) (starting Oct. 2018) WITH 4 MODULES
 - MANAGING SUSTAINABILITY
 - COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABILITY
 - SHAPING SUSTAINABILITY
 - RESEARCHING SUSTAINABILITY
- LECTURE SERIES AND SEMINARS OF THE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE SUSTAIN IT! and of the UNIT FOR SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY MANAGEMENT
- SUSTAINABILITY TOOLBOX (2018/19)
- ANNUAL RESEARCH- AND PHD-WORK-SHOPS AS PART OF THE SPRING-CAMPUS-CONFERENCES (since 2015)

Sustainability-related Courses



Courses Related to the SDGs



Interdisciplinary public lecture series in Summer Semester 2017

*“Transforming Our World: Sustainability
at the Freie Universität Berlin.”*



Image credit: Freie Universität Berlin; Sustainability & Energy Management Unit



Image credit: Freie Universität Berlin; Office of News and Public Affairs

*The 17 SDGs of the UN in the focus of
scientific and institutional practice”*

New area “Sustainable Development” in the General Professional Skills Courses (ABV)

- Part of Bachelor's degree programs at FUB
- 150 credits in the core subject
- 30 credits in one of two interdisciplinary professional focus areas
 - ✓ General professional skills courses (ABV)
 - ✓ Teaching-related professional courses (LBW)
- Mandatory component of Bachelor's degree programs (exceptions: medicine and law)
- Interdisciplinary structure of participants in central ABV

General Professional Skills Courses (ABV)

- **Goal:** Providing supplementary skill sets and knowledge in career-orientated fields

- **Structure**

General professional skills (ABV) courses (30 credits)	
<p>Mandatory professional internship</p> <p>Internship module (5, 10, or 15 credits) or Internship abroad module (20, 25, or 30 credits)</p>	<p>Modules in six competence areas (5, 10, or 15 credits)</p> <p><i>Discipline-specific ABV-courses</i></p> <p>1. Subject-related additional qualifications</p> <p><i>Central ABV-courses</i></p> <p>2. Foreign language 3. Information and media skills 4. Gender and diversity awareness 5. Organization and management 6. Communications skills 7. Sustainable Development (NEW: Winter semester 2018 / 2019) 8. Research-orientated learning (NEW: Winter semester 2018 / 2019)</p>

Objectives, Content, and Coordination

■ Learning objectives

- Understanding the various dimensions and concepts of sustainability
- Becoming familiar with global societal challenges and SDGs
- Learning to collaborate in interdisciplinary teams
- Acquiring professional orientation knowledge in sustainability management, communication and research on sustainability-related issues
- Gaining competences according to the learning and teaching concept "Education for Sustainable Development" (ESD)

■ Content

- Distinction between a theoretical and a practical part

■ Coordination

- Unit for Sustainability & Energy Management

Area „Sustainable Development“ at a Glance

	Managing Sustainability	Communicating Sustainability	Shaping Sustainability	Researching Sustainability
Theoretical Part	Global societal challenges, dimensions of sustainable development, 17 SDGs, ESD, CSR, service learning, and sustainability management			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sustainability management / sub-processes such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – mission statement development – goal-setting / planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communications tools related to sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> service learning project management inter- and trans-disciplinary working methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject - depending on the research questions
Practical Part	Guided interdisciplinary teams to take on practical project tasks			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> administration critical thinking skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communications strategies based on the ESD teaching concept self-awareness to understand their own choices in communicating with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> campus community partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complex problems and connections within the context of sustainable development create thoughtful measures for solutions

Current Situation

- **Implementation of 3 pilot courses since Summer Semester 2017 with around 50 participants**
- **High level of acceptance of practical approach by the students**
- **Several campus-related projects (e.g. green areas management at FUB, providing a rental bike system on campus, connecting unigardening with an intercultural meeting space, comparison of the energy management of UBC and FUB)**
- **One Course organized the University Days for Sustainability + Climate Protection 2017 as a living lab approach**
- **Interdisciplinary cooperation was mostly seen as challenging but „thrilling“ by the students**

Current and next steps

- **Recruiting of lecturers at FUB (and beyond)**
- **Creating a digital Sustainability Toolbox with information and methodical support for teachers and students**
- **Designing an ESD training course for lecturers**
- **Developing courses for the Teaching-related professional courses (LBW) for primary school**
- **Designing a sustainability courses website**

Thank you for your attention!



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Current Results

- **15 Percent of all courses provide a good foundation for future networking and further development**
- **Sustainability related courses cover all SDGs**
- **Individual conversations with researchers show a strong commitment to more interdisciplinary cooperation across all departments and disciplines**

Interdisciplinary public lecture series in Summer Semester 2017

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