

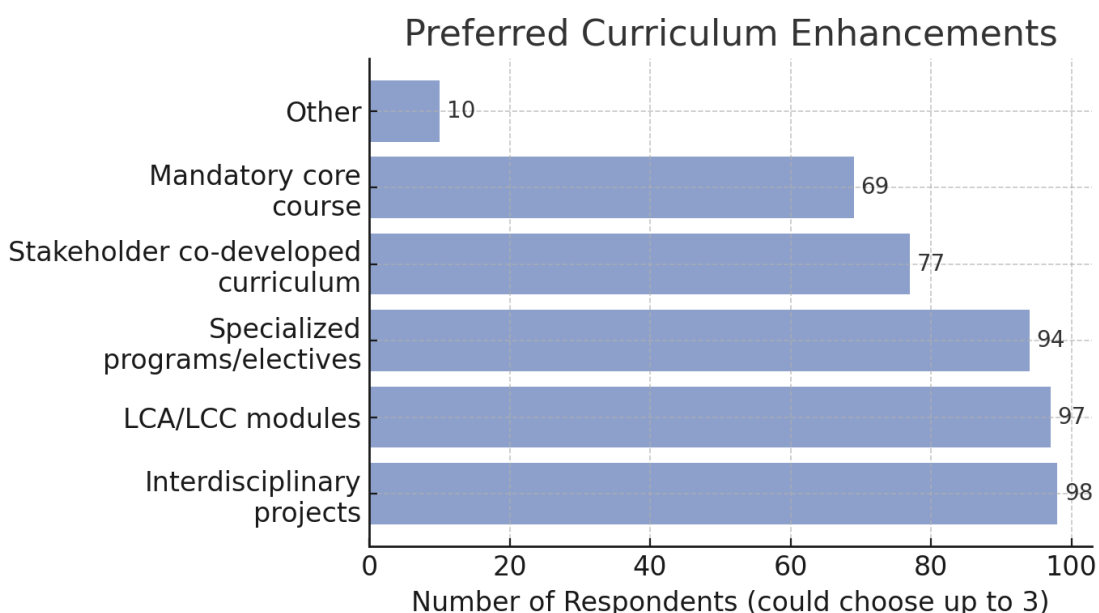
**Unite! Green Transition Needs Analysis –
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
of Student Survey Report**

**MS20 – A guide to a sound green trans-
European campus**

WP 8 An Open Innovation Community for the Green Transition
*Executive Summary
of the MS20 survey report*

The summarised report presents the findings of a needs analysis survey conducted among students including doctoral candidates of the Unite! European University Alliance, focusing on sustainability (“green transition”) in research, education, and campus operations. The survey received responses from 203 students across nine Unite! technical universities in Europe. The gender distribution was nearly balanced (48% female and 47% male), with a small minority identifying as non-binary, preferring not to disclose their gender, or selecting other categories. The sample included students from undergraduate, Master’s, and doctoral levels. The response count per university varied, reflecting differences in outreach and engagement – for instance, 53 responses came from Universidade de Lisboa and 42 from Wroclaw Tech, whereas only 2 came from Aalto and 1 from Grenoble. Overall, five universities contributed 25 or more responses each, providing a reasonably diverse sample despite the imbalance. The analysis reveals a high level of respondents' awareness and enthusiasm for sustainability: over half of respondents rated their sustainability awareness as high or very high, and **~90%** consider it important that their university aligns with green transition principles in academics, research, and campus management. Students largely feel current curricula offer only limited exposure to sustainable development topics – nearly three-quarters report *no or only some* sustainability content in their studies – and they express a strong desire for more integration of sustainability into their learning experience.

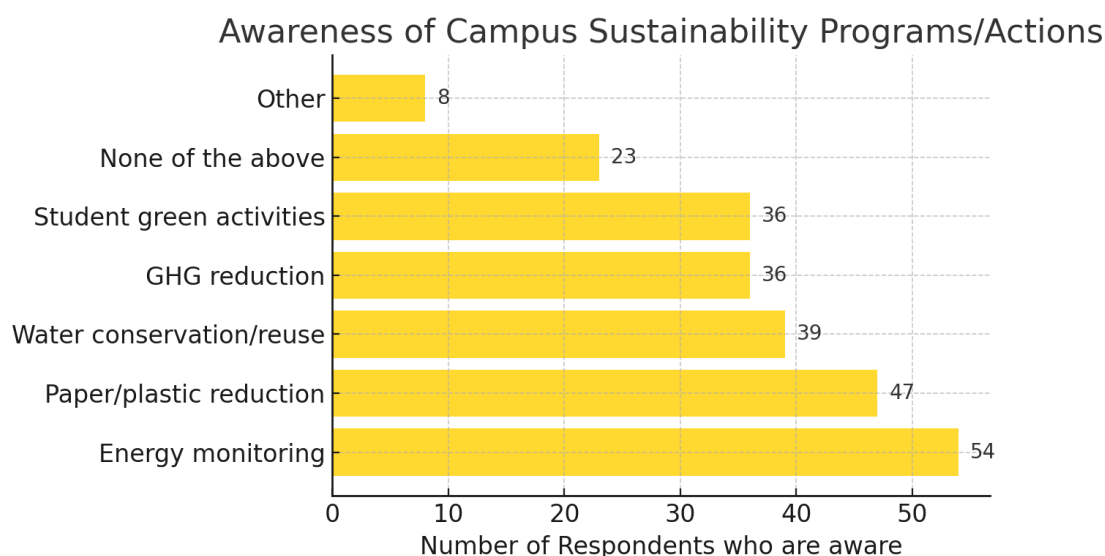
Students identified several preferred strategies to strengthen sustainability in the curriculum. **Interdisciplinary projects, life-cycle assessment (LCA) modules** embedded in courses, and **new specialized electives/programs** on climate and sustainability were each selected by nearly half of respondents as top measures to introduce (far more than those favoring a mandatory general course).



Students also widely support incorporating the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into education: 62% deem it *very important or essential* that all programs include explicit SDG-aligned learning outcomes. Over 60% of respondents indicated they would take part in elective courses or training on SDGs and the green transition, confirming strong student demand for additional learning opportunities in this area.

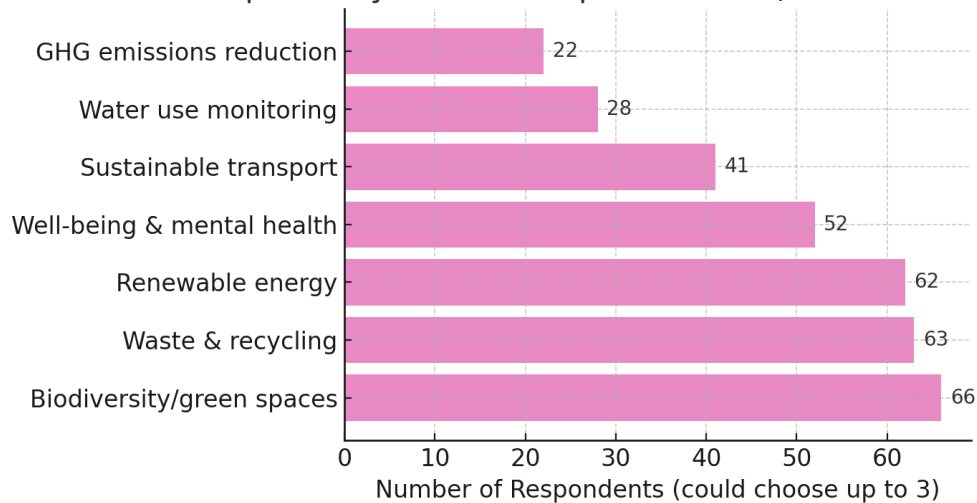
In terms of research and innovation, students are most aware of campus research addressing **Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9)** and **Climate Action (SDG 13)**, while fewer recognize work on **Life on Land (SDG 15)**. A large majority (around 70–75%) consider it “*very important*” or “*essential*” for their university to implement sustainability-focused research policies – such as monitoring the environmental impact of research, prioritizing funding for sustainable projects, and promoting dedicated sustainability research groups. About half of the students expressed personal interest in getting involved in sustainability-related research projects or thematic communities themselves, with only 15% saying “no.”

Students’ perspectives on campus sustainability efforts show moderate awareness of existing initiatives. For example, 54 respondents ($\approx 40\%$ of those surveyed) know of campus energy monitoring programs, and 47 know of paper/plastic reduction plans, but 23 students ($\sim 15\%$) were not aware of *any* green campus actions.



This indicates a need for better communication and visibility of sustainability measures on campus. When asked which campus actions should be top priorities, students most frequently endorsed **biodiversity & green spaces, waste reduction, and renewable energy use** (each picked by $\sim 30\%$ of respondents).

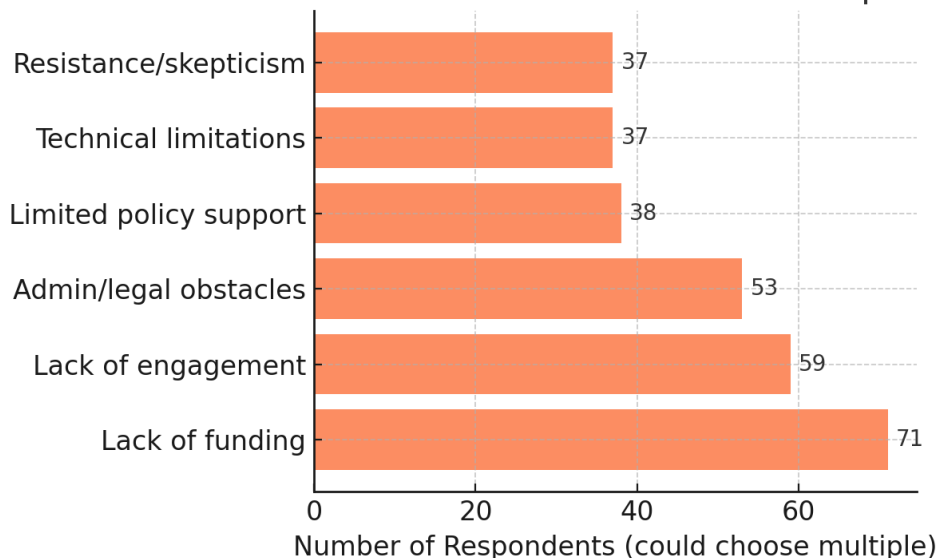
Top Priority Green Campus Actions (Student Preference)



Support was also high for improving student well-being and mental health initiatives (reflecting a holistic view of “green” campus to include well-being), whereas actions like water use monitoring, sustainable transport, and especially generic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction were chosen by fewer respondents. The lower ranking of “GHG emissions reduction” may suggest that students prefer concrete, visible initiatives (e.g. green spaces or cycling infrastructure) or assume that GHG reductions will result from the other actions.

Respondents identified **lack of funding** as by far the most significant barrier to implementing green transition plans (selected by 71 students), followed by **insufficient student/staff engagement** (59) and **administrative or legal obstacles** (53).

Perceived Barriers to Green Transition Implementation



Lesser but notable barriers include limited policy support and technical/infrastructural constraints. To

overcome these challenges, most students (56%) favor a *structured, phased rollout* of sustainability initiatives (e.g. piloting projects before scaling campus-wide), as opposed to purely gradual changes or attempting all changes at once. Over half (54%) indicated they would personally be willing to contribute to campus green actions (volunteering in clean-ups, attending workshops, etc.), with only one in ten unwilling – highlighting an opportunity to harness student engagement if given the chance.

In summary, the student survey reveals a clear mandate for Unite! universities to intensify their sustainability efforts in curriculum, research, and campus practices. Students are eager for more sustainability content in their education and broadly support the Unite! Green Standards' goals for a greener campus. Key recommendations include embedding sustainability across the curriculum (with practical, interdisciplinary learning experiences), visibly expanding green infrastructure and transparency on campus (publishing sustainability performance data), and addressing institutional barriers by securing funding and strengthening community engagement. These findings will inform action plans within Unite!'s "Open Innovation Community for the Green Transition" (WP8) to ensure that student needs and preferences shape the alliance's green transition initiatives.

Closing Remark: The summarised report conveys a hopeful message: Unite! students want their universities to be leaders in sustainability and are ready to contribute actively. From curriculum and research to campus operations and governance, they have provided a clear mandate and practical ideas. The recommendations presented here, grounded in their feedback, are intended to translate this mandate into concrete action. As WUST and its partners validate milestone MS20 through the full version of this report, the true measure of success will lie in the extent to which these insights drive real change on the ground. If the student-driven recommendations are implemented, Unite! universities will not only meet but likely exceed the Green Standards – powered by an active, engaged academic community. This partnership between students and university leadership will help ensure that a sustainable campus is not merely an inspiration, but a lived reality across the alliance, inspiring others beyond.