

Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI)

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The Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) was launched on 1 March 2012 under the aegis of the office of the Executive Coordinators of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

The HESI, which is targeted at universities and business schools, is aimed at creating an enlarged understanding of sustainable development and its implications for how we live work and do business. It is hoped that the initiative will result in larger numbers of graduates globally who understand sustainable development, its meaning for their discipline and area of enterprise, natural resource consumption and the methods through which market and shareholder value might be enhanced by incorporating sustainable practices as central to how they operate.

The core message is that those who occupy the planet are all shareholders of Earth Incorporated, that we are all potential practitioners of sustainability and that by investing in natural resource capital, the return on investment can be high for the planet and the citizens, countries, and companies which occupy it.

A supporting Declaration has been drafted which universities and business schools are being invited to sign. In synopsis HESI invites institutions of tertiary education to commit to the following:

- Reducing their large ecological footprints by practicing the 3 Rs, proper waste management, instituting energy and water use policies
- Greening their campuses including their buildings, retrofitting where necessary
- As major influences on local economies wherever they are located, to green their supply chains and procurement policies
- Support research into green technologies
- Producing and promoting literature which compiles best practices in sustainability and create a body of work around sustainability issues, including as it relates to business practice
- Teaching sustainable development as a core module across all disciplines in the university so that every graduate has an understanding of issues in the development dialogue such as the concept of planetary boundaries, climate change, sustainability, natural resource capital and protection as it relates to his or her area of learning or enterprise - this will not only produce better rounded graduates but practitioners of sustainability in all disciplines

- Supporting sustainable methods of transport in and around campus
- Disseminating information and sustainable development material amongst their international networks and local communities.

HESI is actively supported by UN University, Academic Initiative, UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO, and Global Compact/PRME, among others. Further information including the Declaration may be found on the Rio+20 website: <http://bit.ly/113P7Po>