

Five ways to create change with our survey data

ETF has conducted research into the attitudes and experiences of education for sustainable development (ESD) amongst the FE workforce. As a thank you to SET members for participating in the research, we've developed this short toolkit to help you get the most out of the survey's findings to create your own positive change.

1 Begin discussing ESD practice

Our findings show that organisational approaches to ESD are really varied. You may be at the beginning of your journey, may have been committed to ESD for a number of years, or may not have started yet. Regardless, you can share the results with colleagues and/or leaders as an entry point to discuss what current practice looks like for you, where the gaps are, and how you could improve. You could focus on one particular area of the survey (embedding ESD in the curriculum, organisational approach, staff CPD etc) or take a whole-institution approach – looking to embed ESD across your curriculum, campus (or estate), community and culture. The partner resource to this one, 'Prompts to help you use our research to further your ESD practice', could help you get conversations going and ensure progress.

2 Enhance your communications

So the survey results won't give you superpowers, but they do give you insights you're your colleagues' opinions and attitudes. You better understand the things they believe, what they find challenging, and what they'd like to see. This helps you discover information that you can use to build common ground between you and colleagues so that you can develop communications and projects that help meet their vision of what a sustainable future for the FE sector looks like. Use findings to frame your ESD work in a way that resonates with popular opinions and recognises concerns felt amongst the sector.

3 Evidence the need for change

Building a case for action on sustainability or ESD often means proving a need for that action – why is it necessary? The data can be used to strengthen your argument by drawing on valid and vast data from the FE workforce. Whether you want to bring ESD into your curriculum, get funding for CPD or encourage your organisation to set strong sustainability targets, you're going to need a strong rationale as to why this is worth the effort. This data strengthens your argument and can help bring in resources to support your work.

4 Know your impact

If you can't measure it, you can't monitor it. Collect similar data for your colleagues to baseline attitudes so you can monitor changes brought about by your organisation's work (perhaps by repeating the survey) as you deliver new initiatives and projects. Similarly, you can use it to benchmark your progress against others in the country.

5 Learn more

Practitioner research, as well as academia and student researchers, are increasingly taking an interest in effective ESD practice. Why not build upon our national data to strengthen knowledge, understanding and thinking about sustainability and education?

So, how are you going to use the data to create change? Join the conversation on social media using #EDSinFE. If you'd like support, have questions or ideas, please get in touch with charlotte.bonner@etfoundation.co.uk