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ROAD2EU SUMMER SCHOOL 2026 — LECTURE 4

Implementation Lab: Green Digital Competences, Just Transition Micro-Credentials and SDG Dashboards

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WHAT THIS LECTURE COVERS

01 Green-transition policy backbone

02 GreenComp

03 Micro-credentials

04 SDG dashboards

05 Institutional rollout

THE GREEN TRANSITION IS BOTH A CLIMATE AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

- The green transition is simultaneously a **climate emergency response and a structural economic transformation** affecting every sector.
- Universities need **practical formats for sustainability competences and flexible learning** — not just sustainability statements.
- This lecture focuses on implementation: turning sustainability policy into concrete learning, credentials, and monitoring tools.

IMPLEMENTATION OVER DISCOURSE

The gap between sustainability ambition and institutional action is wide. This lecture is about closing that gap with practical tools that departments can use immediately.



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THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL LINKS CLIMATE AMBITION TO SKILLS AND INSTITUTIONAL ADAPTATION

- The **European Green Deal** provides the long-term direction for the EU's transformation to a climate-neutral, resource-efficient economy.
- **Skills, reskilling, and institutional adaptation** are explicitly central to the just transition — not optional add-ons.
- Universities are expected to contribute to the transition through curriculum reform, research, and community engagement.

THE GREEN DEAL AS EDUCATION POLICY

The European Green Deal is not just an environmental policy; it is a comprehensive transformation agenda that directly shapes what universities should teach, research, and do.



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THE 2022 RECOMMENDATION CALLS FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN POLICY, CURRICULA, AND EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

- The 2022 Council Recommendation on **Learning for the Green Transition and Sustainable Development** calls for sustainability to be integrated into education policy, curricula, and educator professional development.
- Institutions should support **interdisciplinary and lifelong-learning approaches** that prepare learners for the complexity of the green transition.
- This Recommendation is the direct education-policy bridge between the Green Deal and institutional action.

THE EDUCATION-POLICY BRIDGE

The 2022 Recommendation translates Green Deal ambitions into specific expectations for education systems, giving institutions a clear mandate for curriculum reform.



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GREENCOMP IS THE EUROPEAN SUSTAINABILITY COMPETENCE BACKBONE FOR CURRICULUM DESIGN

- **GreenComp** (European Sustainability Competence Framework) is the EU's reference framework for sustainability competences in education.
- It provides a structured, four-area map covering **values, systems thinking, future literacy, and action competences**.
- GreenComp can support learning outcomes design, assessment criteria, and curriculum review across all disciplines.

THE COMPETENCE BACKBONE

GreenComp is to sustainability education what DigCompEdu is to digital education: a shared language for designing, assessing, and recognising competences across institutions.



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GREEN-DIGITAL COMPETENCES COMBINE SUSTAINABILITY VALUES WITH DATA LITERACY AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

- **Green-digital competences** are a ROAD2EU synthesis of the two major EU transition demands: the green and digital transitions.
- They combine **sustainability values and systems thinking** (from GreenComp) with **data literacy, digital tools, and applied problem-solving** (from DigComp/DEAP).
- Graduates with green-digital competences are equipped for the most in-demand roles in the transition economy.

THE TWIN-TRANSITION SYNTHESIS

The green and digital transitions are not separate agendas. Green-digital competences are the practical response to the twin-transition challenge that every European economy faces.



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MICRO-CREDENTIALS SUPPORT SHORT, FLEXIBLE, TARGETED LEARNING FOR JUST TRANSITION SKILLS

- **Micro-credentials** are short, flexible, targeted learning units that can be stacked, recognised, and transferred across institutions.
- They are especially useful for **reskilling and upskilling** workers and learners affected by the just transition, who need rapid, focused skills development.
- Micro-credentials allow universities to respond quickly to emerging skills needs without redesigning entire programmes.

FLEXIBILITY FOR THE JUST TRANSITION

The just transition will require millions of workers to acquire new skills quickly. Micro-credentials are the most agile, scalable, and accessible format for meeting this demand.



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SIX MANDATORY DESIGN ELEMENTS FOR A COMPLIANT MICRO-CREDENTIAL

ELEMENT 1

Clear Title

A specific, descriptive title that clearly communicates the scope and focus of the learning unit.

ELEMENT 2

Learning Outcomes

Specific, measurable outcomes expressed using active verbs and aligned with EQF levels.

ELEMENT 3

Workload

Total estimated learning time in hours, expressed as ECTS credits where applicable.

ELEMENT 4

Assessment

Clear description of how learning outcomes will be assessed and what evidence is required.

ELEMENT 5

Quality Assurance

Institutional QA processes applied to the micro-credential, aligned with ESG standards.

ELEMENT 6

Recognition Route

Clear pathway for recognition, stacking, and transfer within and across institutions.



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DASHBOARDS CONNECT SUSTAINABILITY AMBITIONS WITH VISIBLE, MEASURABLE EVIDENCE

- **Sustainability dashboards** connect institutional ambitions with visible, publicly accountable evidence of progress.
- They help institutions use both **Eurostat SDG monitoring data** and their own internal indicators to track performance.
- Dashboards make sustainability real: they transform abstract commitments into specific, measurable, reviewable targets.

MAKING SUSTAINABILITY MEASURABLE

What gets measured gets managed. A simple, well-maintained dashboard is more valuable than a comprehensive sustainability strategy that is never reviewed against evidence.



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SDG 4 AND RELATED GOALS MOST RELEVANT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

PRIMARY SDG

SDG 4 — Quality Education

Directly relevant to higher education, adult learning, digital skills, and lifelong learning. The primary SDG for university dashboards.

SUPPORTING SDG

SDG 8 — Decent Work and Economic Growth

Relevant for graduate employability, industry-connected learning, and just transition skills.

SUPPORTING SDG

SDG 9 — Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Relevant for research, innovation capacity, and digital infrastructure development.

SUPPORTING SDGS

SDGs 11, 12, and 13

Sustainable cities, responsible consumption, and climate action — relevant for green curriculum and campus sustainability.



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A SMALL DEPARTMENTAL SDG DASHBOARD THAT CAN ACTUALLY BE MAINTAINED



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1

Participation

Number of students and staff participating in sustainability-related learning activities per year.

2

Short-Course Provision

Number of short courses, workshops, or micro-credentials offered on green and sustainability topics.

3

Digital-Skills-Related Outcomes

Number of graduates achieving verified green-digital competence outcomes.

4

Micro-Credentials Issued

Number of sustainability-related micro-credentials awarded to students and external learners.

5

Stakeholder Engagement

Number of active partnerships with employers, NGOs, and public bodies on sustainability initiatives.

EVEN SUSTAINABILITY WORK NEEDS BASIC GOVERNANCE DISCIPLINE

- Name **one lead owner, one support unit, one or two KPIs, and one review point** — the minimum governance structure for any sustainability initiative.
- **Start small and build coherence** — a focused, well-governed initiative is more valuable than a broad, poorly managed one.
- Sustainability governance should follow the same principles as any other institutional governance: clarity, ownership, accountability, and review.

GOVERNANCE DISCIPLINE

Sustainability initiatives fail for the same reasons as other initiatives: unclear ownership, vague indicators, and no review mechanism. Apply the same governance discipline to green work.



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- **European Commission / JRC.** *GreenComp: The European Sustainability Competence Framework.* 2022.
- **European Commission.** *European Approach to Micro-Credentials.* 2022.
- **Eurostat.** *Sustainable Development Goals — EU Monitoring Report.* Annual series.
- **European Commission.** *Union of Skills.* 2025.



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Questions & Discussion

Should your department start with a micro-credential, a dashboard, or curriculum review?

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