

# Green Impact Students' Unions 2021-22 FAQs

## Q. When do we need to have submitted the toolkit by?

A. 5pm on Tuesday 3rd May 2022

## Q. Remind me of the key dates

A.

- Launch: 30th August 2021
- Intro to GISU welcome webinar: 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021, 11am
- Annual sustainability survey: 25<sup>th</sup> October –14<sup>th</sup> November 2021
- Student Sustainability Summit: 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> November
- GISU contacts virtual skills & networking day: 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021, 10am-4pm
- GISU midway 'check-in' calls: w/c 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022
- National SDG teach in: 21<sup>st</sup> –27<sup>th</sup> February 2022
- Progress and action planning webinar: 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022, 11am
- Submission deadline: Tuesday 3rd May 2022, 5pm
- Audits: June 2022
- Awards confirmed: July 2022

## Q. Have any criteria changed this year?

A. The five rolling have been updated again this year. These criteria can be identified by the word '**ROLLING**' in the SU Operations sections. In response to feedback from students' unions, this year the rolling criteria continue to have a focus on procurement, food and support for national campaigns.

Taking into consideration feedback from unions, we have **refined the campaigns section from 10 criteria to 8 criteria**. We hope this will reduce repetition of comments and evidence for SUs.

We have adapted **PA011** to provide additional guidance, including for non-commercial SUs, and have included recognition for SUs taking part in Alcohol Impact or Drug & Alcohol Impact by automatically accrediting them full marks. **SU005** has also been adapted to guide and suggest opportunities for non-commercial SUs.

We have added **KN005** (*The union is actively supporting decolonising & decarbonising action*) as SUs feedback that they would to see criteria to encourage and guide decolonising work.

Additional resources have been linked to in several criteria as we continue to develop the guidance for each criterion.

## Q. What are the scoring thresholds?

A. This year we have introduced two separate scoring thresholds to meet; one for commercial unions and one for small specialist or FE. This aims to enable small SUs to be accredited at a level which is more in-line with their possibilities.

Across the whole toolkit we want unions to be ambitious and think creatively about how they can change and influence the campus to be more sustainable no matter what size you are. With the scaled scoring model for each criterion this will also enable students' unions to gain points for trying to make progress in areas where it doesn't have full ownership or responsibility (see question about questions relating to the institution).

### **Commercial thresholds:**

Working towards accreditation – less than 100 points scored

Good – 100 to 249 points scored

Very Good – 250 to 299 points scored

Excellent – 300 or more points scored

### **Small specialist or FE thresholds:**

Working towards accreditation – less than 85 points scored

Good – 85 to 234 points scored

Very Good – 235 to 284 points scored

Excellent – 285 or more points scored

## Q. Are there any mandatory criteria?

A. Due to the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and unions having to therefore be responsive in their ways of working, no criteria are mandatory again this year which we hope will support unions to achieve the award they deserve.

## Q. What is the SU and Auditor score on each action?

A. Applicants state what score they think they should get, up to the maximum, and we validate it compared to others as part of a moderation process. This allows us to identify how unions are doing on any particular criteria in relation to others. You state your suggested score and we will validate it through the evidence and any audit.

## Q. How do we score ourselves?

A. To help you score yourselves we have come up with a scoring guide. This year we have added the scoring guidance in the 'How you will be audited' section of the online toolkit.

Note: we will consider the size and capacity of the union when awarding points in the audit and will expect to see progress year to year to maintain the points you have achieved previously. However, this is also taken into consideration through the two separate scoring thresholds.

### Q. What evidence do we need to provide?

A. Each criteria will be accompanied by a description of the evidence that we would expect to see, including the process for you to present it to us. Please upload the most relevant documents you feel necessary (no more than 3 per criteria). Should the auditor require more evidence this will be requested within the audit period and will not impact on your final accreditation.

### Q. Can we include things we did last academic year?

A. As a general rule you should assume we would want to see evidence that things have happened **this academic year**. However, some criteria may have been completed in previous years, if the activity you are claiming as evidence started before the current academic year then please state this in the evidence box for that criteria. To retain or improve on your accreditation year to year, we'll be predominately judging what you have done this academic year.

### Q. Why do some of the criteria relate to what the institution is doing?

A. There are a number of actions which directly or indirectly relate to what the institution is doing in relation to sustainability. For instance, the inclusion of sustainability in the institution's main strategy could be significantly transformative, as such we hope that you will try and engage and influence the institution on this subject whenever the opportunity arises. This may take several years, but we will award you points relative to the progress which has been made each year.

Other actions such as the reduction of utilities may be indirectly related to your institution as they house the energy monitoring system, enabling you to easily measure the impact of any changes you make. For actions like this we expect you to work in collaboration with your institution, being proactive and lobbying them for facilities or information to help you become more sustainable.

### Q. How do I tackle the outcomes section?

A. The outcomes section is worth a total of 80 points, and we've done this to encourage you to prioritise the monitoring and evaluation of your sustainability work. Do refer to the scoring matrix to help you build up points in this section, but you can use this [template](#) to help structure your comments and evidence.

### Q. What are the 'rolling' criteria?

A. We have five rolling criteria, identified by the word 'ROLLING'. The rolling criteria will change annually to ensure we collectively keep on top of operational issues. It is anticipated that all other criteria will stay pretty much the same each year. For unions that want to access the old toolkit as an informal auditing resource, you can [download a condensed and cleaned list of the criteria here](#).

### Q. What do we need to do for the self-defined criteria?

A. This is your opportunity to share any other initiatives or work which you feel hasn't already been covered elsewhere in the toolkit. One of the three actions is to showcase an 'innovative intervention'

which you feel is a new approach to promoting sustainability on campus. The remaining two self-defined actions can be any other activity which you feel deserves recognition.

### Q. What support is available?

- A.
- Resource bank – we have an [online resource bank](#) accessible to all GISU participants, this will house guidance documents, templates, case studies and webinar recordings.
  - Webinars – We deliver webinars to welcome & introduce you to the programme, to help keep you on track and we coordinate webinars on a range of themes to facilitate idea sharing and inspire action.
  - Peer to Peer – We have a great network of sustainability contacts, help partner SUs and support or facilitate online forum calls. There are various online platforms to join in discussions, share ideas or ask questions such as the '[NUS Sustainability, Ethics & Climate Action](#)' [Facebook Workplace page](#).
  - Email – we run a monthly SOS-UK newsletter, housing updates for students' unions as well as other sustainability articles, [sign up for this here](#). We will send updates and communications on GISU to all SU contacts listed in the current year's sign-up form.
  - Phone call Mid-Way – Early 2022, we will offer calls for all participating SUs to check-in with your progress, offer support and guidance and to gather your feedback.
  - Ad hoc support – if you're struggling at any point throughout the year, or would like to suggest an idea for a future webinar, case study or news piece, please [get in touch through the GISU inbox](#).
  - Training & Networking – if you'd like more tailored on-site or remote training for your staff, officers or students, you can request to purchase this when signing up for GISU or [get in contact with us](#). We will host a joint skills and networking day on 2nd December 2021 for our GISU contacts at an additional cost.
  - Learning and development opportunities – Students' Unions participating in GISU will receive a **10% reduction** in price to [SOS-UK's Learning Academy offerings](#). Offerings particularly relevant for SUs include the Officer Sustainability Bootcamp, Course reps & sustainability, campaign planning and carbon literacy training.

### Q. What awards are available this year?

A. Every union who undertakes the audit process will receive a working towards, good, very good or excellent accreditation based upon meeting the points threshold. In addition to this there will be 4 national awards, Overall winner, Nations Award, Most Improved and the Student Leadership on Sustainability award which will be open for unions to make nominate individuals and student groups. If you would like a slate award to show your achievement, this will cost £25. We now charge for these in response to feedback from students' union on what support and resources were a priority in relation to programme cost.

### Q. How will the audits work?

A. SOS-UK staff will continue to aim to audit all submitting unions virtually. We will be in touch with further details about the audits from April onwards.

### Q. How will we find out about any updates to GISU this year?

A. We will send all updates out via email to the three named individuals on your sign-up form. You may pick up on additional sustainability opportunities via the '[NUS Sustainability, Ethics & Climate Action](#)' [Facebook Workplace page](#). For any other queries, please contact us on [gisu@sos-uk.org](mailto:gisu@sos-uk.org).