



STUDENTS  
ORGANISING FOR  
SUSTAINABILITY  
UNITED KINGDOM

TEACH  
THE  
FUTURE

UCU  
University and College Union



nus

national union of **students**

# CALLING EDUCATION MINISTERS TO STEP UP FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET

**A joint statement from National Union of Students', Students Organising for Sustainability, Teach the Future, Mock COP and the University and College Union.**

21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

The climate and ecological crisis are the greatest threats of our time. We need urgent change if we are to avoid catastrophic temperature increase that is predicted to reach the point of no return. If we are to achieve the change required to curtail the current crisis, we need everyone in this together, which is why we are calling for the G20 Education Ministers' Meetings in Sicily on 22<sup>nd</sup> June to put climate education to the top of their priorities.

**We know students are concerned about the climate crisis and want their education to be addressing this.**

**University and college students internationally<sup>1</sup>:**

- 92% agree that sustainable development is something which all universities and colleges should actively incorporate and promote
- 75% describe their feelings about climate change and their future as 'worried'
- 40% report low or no coverage of sustainable development concept in their course curriculum.

**UK school pupils<sup>2</sup>:**

- 4% feel that they know a lot about climate change
- 68% want to learn more about the environment.

**UK school teachers<sup>3</sup>:**

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<sup>1</sup> Global student survey on sustainability (SOS-International, 2020), c7000 respondents from over 100 organisations | <https://sos.earth/survey/>

<sup>2</sup> Schools and sustainability (NUS & Green Schools Project, 2018-19), 2990 school pupils in England | <https://www.sos-uk.org/research/schools-and-sustainability>

<sup>3</sup> Teaching the Future (Teach the Future & Teacher Tapp, 2021), c7500 UK respondents | <https://www.teachthefuture.uk/teacher-research>

- 70% feel they haven't received adequate training to education students about climate change.

We need all students to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, competencies and values to be able to act with the best interest of both people and planet. All of society need to come together so we can pave the path for just and fair solutions to the climate and ecological crisis, and education is key to this.

As a coalition of students, educators and education professionals, we are asking the G20 Education Ministers' Meetings in Sicily to table the proposal for education globally to **put climate as a top priority for learning by making it integrated, mandatory and assessed.**

**To address the climate crisis, we need to be teaching all students and pupils about climate change for a sustainable future, and to ensure our education buildings are fit for purpose. Our coalition is asking for Education Ministers to ensure this by:**

- **Providing adequate funding for education buildings to be carbon net zero by 2030.** Our education buildings play an essential role in how and what we learn, by retrofitting them to net-zero emissions by 2030, we can create green jobs across the country and inspire students to live sustainably.
- **Embedding and assessing climate education across all academic disciplines and levels.** To have purpose, education and learning needs to be relevant and meaningful. All students and pupils need to understand the causes, implications and what can be done to mitigate the climate and ecological crisis within the context of their academic disciplines, and to enable them to deliver on climate justice.
- **Including green skills in vocational courses.** Sustainability and climate are not niche subjects, they must be incorporated into all training and education. We need a global workforce capable of bringing us to net zero in a just and sustainable way, therefore green skills need to be part of all learning.
- **Ensuring all teachers, trainers and educators have the knowledge, skills, competencies and confidence to embed sustainability and climate in teaching, learning and training.** Training requirements, quality assurance agencies and education inspectorate frameworks need to have mandatory inclusion of climate justice education and sustainability to ensure this can be delivered on and is a core part of supporting the education system to make this critical transition.