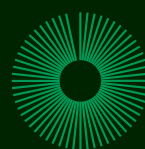
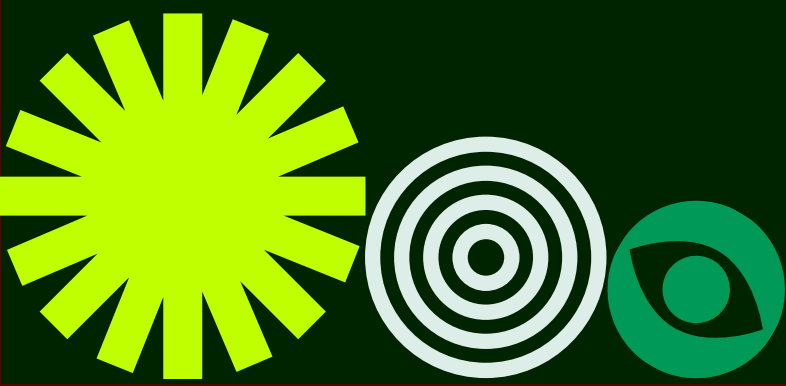


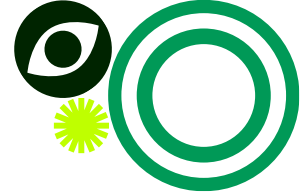
# Criteria for embedding the Skills for Planet Blueprint in HE

July 2025



**Skills  
for  
Planet**

**Design  
Council**



This document sets out the Design Council's criteria for embedding the Blueprint into university design courses.

## Context

### Skills for Planet Mission

In 2024, Design Council announced its mission to upskill 1 million designers in green design skills by 2030. The impetus behind this mission was the publication of our [Green Design Skills Gap Report](#), which highlights that **66% of designers have designed for planet in the last 12-months, but only 43% of designers feel that they have the capabilities required to design in this way**. This suggests a troubling gap between the demand for green design skills, and the supply of designers who have this skillset.

**71% of designers believe that the demand for design for planet is going to grow**, meaning that this concerning gap between supply and demand is set to widen further.

Closing this skills gap is essential if design is going to play a role in decarbonising industries, embedding a circular economy and protecting vital biodiversity. As the National Champion of Design, the Design Council sees it as our imperative to close this skills gap.

### Skills for Planet Blueprint

The Skills for Planet Blueprint is our first step towards achieving this mission. It is a landmark resource that outlines the critical green skills that all designers need, providing a shared language that will make cross-sector conversations and skills-building possible.

The Blueprint defines eighteen Green Design Skills, organised into six interconnected areas:

1. Regenerating Nature
2. Embedding Circularity
3. Eliminating Emissions
4. Empowering Green Communities
5. Influencing Green Behaviour
6. Evaluating Green Impact

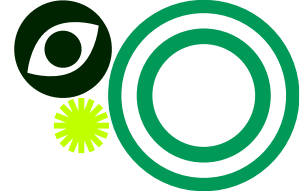
The Blueprint was developed with 100+ design experts across education, industry and government including from the Council for Higher Education in Art & Design, Arts and Humanities Research Council, Design Business Association, Design & Technology Association, National Society for Education in Art & Design, RSA and RCA.

## Criteria

We want universities to take the Skills for Planet Blueprint and embed it into their design courses, so that design students gain the critical green skills needed, addressing the green skills gap in higher education (HE). Students are the designers of tomorrow and so it is essential to provide them with the skills they need to design responsibly in industry.

But what does upskilling students with green design skills look like? What do we mean by 'embed' in this context? How will we know which students have been upskilled? To help with this, the Design Council has outlined a set of criteria by which we can judge whether a course has effectively embedded the Blueprint and, as a result, whether their students have been upskilled.





## Considerations

When defining criteria we need to tread the line between encouraging all university design departments to embed the Blueprint, while also setting some guardrails so that embedding is not a vanity exercise, but a meaningful lever for green upskilling.

For transparency, our initial considerations include:

- **Embedding must be explicit.** Although many courses may use the Blueprint as an input or as part of their learning materials, these subtle and implicit instances of ‘embedding’ the Blueprint cannot easily be counted and are hard to gauge.
- **Criteria should be judged at the course level.** To say that a university has definitively embedded the Blueprint creates unnecessary barriers to entry: it may be that only one design course is in a position to amend its content, but others are further behind. We won’t require a whole design department to embed the Blueprint for it to count, but we will require at least one course to have done so.
- **We won’t count the Blueprint as embedded unless it will inform content that a whole course cohort will benefit from.** If a course decides to embed the Blueprint but only in one optional module, upskilling will not take place in a significant enough way, plus it will make counting students very complicated.

## Criteria and example indicators

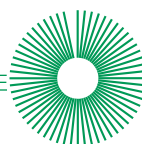
The following criteria will be used to assess whether a course has effectively embedded the Blueprint. There are three criteria, with each one containing a set of example indicators underneath.

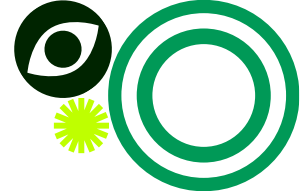
### 1. Explicit integration into course documentation

- a. The Skills for Planet Blueprint is written into course aims and objectives – i.e. with an explicit statement like: ‘The course is committed to embedding the Design Council’s Skills for Planet Blueprint’
- b. The Skills for Planet Blueprint is written into course learning outcomes (NB: this could be specifically about incorporating the learning outcomes developed with CHEAD group, or could be more open)
- c. The Green Design Mindset is referenced in course outlines and module descriptions
- d. The Green Design Skills are referenced in course outlines and module descriptions – either in broad brush strokes in an introductory capacity, or more thoroughly across at least one of the six skill areas
- e. At least one core module, which the whole cohort will take, includes direct teaching of the Green Design Skills – either in broad brush strokes in an introductory capacity, or more thoroughly across at least one of the six skill areas

### 2. Explicit integration into course assessment

- a. At least one assessed project or design brief must explicitly require students to demonstrate their Green Design Skills (either broad brush strokes across all 18, in more depth across one skill area or demonstrating an interconnected skillset across more than one skill area)
- b. Assessment rubrics should include the Skills for Planet Blueprint as a part of evaluation mechanisms
- c. In longer or final-year projects, students should be assessed on their ability to integrate Green Design Skills at multiple points and in a nuanced way, showing how the skills lead to positive environmental outcomes





### 3. Evidence of integration into course content and learning materials

- a. Provision of example lesson materials that clearly showcase Skills for Planet Blueprint being woven into the course in a genuine way
- b. Provision of example briefs or other course content that clearly showcases Skills for Planet Blueprint being woven into the course in a genuine way
- c. Evidence that at least one faculty member/ course member is well-versed in regenerative design and is therefore fluent in the subject matter contained within the Blueprint, and able to teach it meaningfully to students

Courses that can evidence the above criteria will receive an endorsement from the Design Council and be permitted to use our Skills for Planet logo on strategic course materials.

*If you are in the process of embedding the Skills for Planet Blueprint, or are planning to do so, please let the Design Council know by completing [this form](#).*

