

The International Sustainability Diploma

by fida

FIDA - The Futures Institute at Dollar Academy is delighted to announce the launch of the International Sustainability Diploma, a new qualification available to schools across Scotland from August 2024.

The Diploma is an innovative one-year programme. Students learn by tackling real-world projects aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and co-created with experts from industry and universities. The course is designed to develop the important skills of independent research, problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration and communication. Instead of examinations, students build a portfolio and have opportunities to present their work through the year. Crucially, entrepreneurship is a golden thread that runs throughout.

We were delighted to be awarded Scottish Government funding to have the Diploma credited onto the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) at Level 6 (equivalent to Higher). This means it is recognised by UCAS, universities, colleges and employers, and also carries international recognition.

Course Structure

Unit 1 – Understanding Sustainability and Design Thinking (20%)

Students will explore the concepts of sustainability through the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and create a social media campaign to raise awareness of an SDG of their choosing. They will also undertake a 'design sprint' challenge, to learn the principles of Design Thinking – a method for solving problems that puts the user at the centre of the process, and involves adapting solutions in response to research, testing and feedback.

Unit 2 – Designing Sustainable Solutions (60%)


Students will choose three 'Global Challenge' projects from a range of options. These offer very different challenges, each rooted in the SDGs – for instance, designing a new wave-powered method for water desalination, an app to support people experiencing climate anxiety, or a monument to make a statement about modern slavery. In each case, students will research the issue and the needs of their target users or audience, generate ideas, and, through a process of feedback and testing, develop and refine their solution. For assessment, the emphasis is on the process rather than the outcome, and students will have the opportunity to build and develop their skills as they move from one project to the next.

Unit 3 – Entrepreneurship: Ideas Into Action (20%)

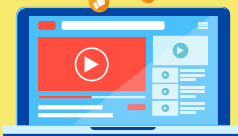
Students will learn about the crucial role of business and social enterprise in achieving the SDGs. They will select one of their three project outcomes from Unit 2 to develop further as a business or social enterprise, working with the Enterprise Team from the University of Stirling. Students will present their proposal and have the opportunity to receive feedback from entrepreneurs.

Total number of pupils and teachers directly enrolled

600+
550+ Pupils
70+ Teachers




75,000+
learners supported
through online videos




Shared Leadership
& Accountability

8
Local Authority
teachers and education
leaders make up our
Steering Group




17
Innovative Global
Challenges designed -
9 launched so far




fida
so far

50+
Local Authority
schools engaged




Workshops and Live Events




6 live workshops for **170** pupils
from **15** different schools

Sustainable Fashion Week online
panel discussion for 50+ participants




21 pupils studied SQA Higher
Politics directly through FIDA
- over 90% achieving A grade.
Dozens more were supported
online



Locations of
participants

Our collaborators



The Building

Whilst thousands of students from over 50 local authority schools across Scotland have benefited from taking part in FIDA projects and using our resources since we launched, a significant limiting factor is the lack of a purpose-built educational centre designed to enable and fully realise the potential of our interdisciplinary way of working. Without a dedicated building, we can only offer these opportunities in traditional, single-subject facilities which are not fit-for-purpose for FIDA. What we need now are teaching and learning spaces where young people can think, design, create, test, collaborate and communicate, all integrated under one roof.

As a result, we are fundraising for our Futures Institute building; a pioneering new learning centre, within which our FIDA initiative can thrive. The building, which received planning permission in July 2023, has been designed by world-renowned architect and Dollar Academy Former Pupil Andrew Whalley OBE, and will offer a compelling alternative to traditional classroom settings. Construction is due to start in summer 2024.

