

# Green Courses and Provision in the West of England

## Guidance Overview

This guidance provides a regional framework for identifying and categorising green courses in the West of England, supporting the region's transition to net zero and nature recovery. It is designed for education providers, policymakers, industry professionals, researchers, and any other individual looking to identify, classify or report on green training provision. The guidance outlines a clear categorisation system for classifying green courses as either in-depth, intermediate, introductory, or non-green courses.

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## Regional Ambition

Green skills are increasingly recognised as vital for the future workforce, and fundamental in achieving net zero targets and safeguarding the natural environment. The UK Government's Green Jobs Taskforce has set an ambitious goal of creating 2 million green jobs by 2030. In the West of England alone, the Green Skills Market Analysis estimates a need for over 45,000 green jobs to meet local net zero targets. The West of England's Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan (CESAP) and Employment and Skills Plan both emphasise the development of green skills and jobs as key drivers of regional growth and strategic investment.

To ensure a successful green transition, the region needs a skills system that can effectively monitor, nurture, and build green skills pathways, whether that's 'stand alone' green qualifications, or incorporating elements of green curriculums within existing provision. However, in the absence of a national definition and framework for 'green skills,' creating a localised approach is essential for driving the green economy forward. This guidance document provides a regional framework for defining, identifying, and monitoring green skills training. By doing so, it establishes a foundation for developing green career pathways as they emerge across industries, thereby supporting the region's growing green economy.

## Using this Guidance

This guidance sets a regional framework to identify and compare the different types of green training courses by their varying green content. The guidance is flexible to accommodate existing, new and evolving green skills needs and training across sectors, and therefore it is encouraged to use the guidance alongside sector-based research. It can be used by a wide range of stakeholders active in the skills system and supports various aspects of training delivery, including:

- **Individual Roles:** Professionals across various functions, including those involved in course management, quality assurance, data monitoring, curriculum design, tutoring, governance, and leadership roles, as well as other stakeholders or individuals who may benefit from using this guidance to categorise or define green skills courses, such as researchers and policymakers.
- **Educational Settings:** Institutions of all types, including Independent Training Providers, Further and Higher Education (FE and HE) providers, non-profit organisations, and others involved in providing education and training.
- **Qualification Types:** This guidance applies to both accredited and non-accredited training across various levels.
- **Industry areas:** The green transition necessitates green skills across numerous industries, extending beyond the low-carbon and nature sectors. Therefore, this guidance is applicable to courses across a wide range of industries.

This document provides clarity and consistency in the identification and promotion of green skills, supporting the region's broader green economy objectives. The framework provides the benefits of:

- Providing a baseline for accurate monitoring and evaluation of different types of green training
- Enables understanding and evidence of gaps and opportunities in green training
- Provides foundations that can help to accelerate future planning and investment in green skills training
- Sets standards to ensure quality and allows for analysis and scrutiny of green provision
- Helps to communicate success and amplify the region's focus and prioritisation around green skills provision, including on Skills Connect: [www.skillsconnect.org.uk](http://www.skillsconnect.org.uk)
- Establishes a shared understanding across the local skills system of what green skills courses are, creating consistency and improved messaging across the region.
- Provides a structure that supports green leadership, gives confidence to decision-makers and lends support to policy and strategy plans.
- Provides a framework that can support providers to develop green Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours within course content and their wider curriculums (i.e. greening of existing curriculums as well as provision of new courses).
- Enables providers to identify and access the appropriate green skills funding and investment opportunities.

## Definitions

The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) has developed a working definition of a green job as one that will *“help to create the job functions, responsibilities, conditions, working practices and/ or business processes which contribute towards reducing emissions, lowering the carbon footprint and protecting the environment.”*

This definition identifies the impact measure of a green job whilst also highlighting how green jobs present differently and can be part or whole aspects of a job role. This approach is akin to the Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education’s (IfATE) classification of occupations into three groups: 1) light, 2) mid and 3) dark green, which indicates the impact the occupation has in helping the UK achieve net-carbon zero by 2050. Taking this into account, this guidance categorises green training into three groups: 1) introductory, 2) intermediate 3) in-depth. This is based on the degree to which the course content directly or indirectly supports green Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSB’s) to support the region’s green economy.

## Classifications

**In-Depth Green Course:** The content of these courses is wholly focused towards equipping learners with specialised, in-depth Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSB’s) to apply in roles where some or all aspects of the job would be wholly dedicated to supporting net zero and/or nature recovery. Examples of In-Depth Green Courses include:

- Ecology and Wildlife Conservation
- Retrofit Coordination and Risk Management
- Solar PV Installation
- Heat Pump Installation
- Climate Science
- Environmental Management
- Low Carbon Heating Technician
- Organisational Sustainability

**Intermediate Green Course:** These courses integrate green KSBs into several areas of course content, but it is not the primary focus of the course. These courses equip learners with some of the relevant fundamental green KSBs related to the subject or industry. However, learners are likely to require further upskilling to progress into specialist green roles. Examples include:

- A plumbing or electrotechnical course with additional content on different renewable technologies as well as industry-specific green careers information.
- Engineering courses that embed green KSBs throughout the course. An example would be the inclusion of green engineering principles and life cycle analysis.
- An automotive course that primarily focuses on conventional vehicles but includes the development of several KSBs in relation to hybrid and electric vehicles.

**Introductory Green Course:** These courses provide green content that offers learners an introductory level understanding of net zero, nature recovery or environmental sustainability. These courses do not necessarily offer specific skills but do raise green awareness and knowledge. Examples of how this could be achieved include:

- Including course content on basic awareness of sustainability principles
- Introductory knowledge of how your industry is responding to the green transition
- Green careers information, advice and guidance

**Non-Green Courses:** These are courses that do not include any green content. Training providers are encouraged to explore ways to embed green KSBs, enabling learners across disciplines to better support industries in adapting to and thriving during the green transition.

*Image: Reference table to illustrate the different features of green course categories*

	Introductory	Intermediate	In-depth
<b>Knowledge</b>	Basic, introductory	Fundamental, underlying	In-depth, specialised
<b>Skills</b>	Potentially, basic	Some practical	In-depth, specialised
<b>Behaviours</b>	Potentially	Potentially	In-depth, specialised
<b>Prominence across course content</b>	Light touch	Several areas	Wholly
<b>How the content supports green occupations</b>	Provides awareness	Provides understanding through embedding some green KSBs. Learners likely require more upskilling to go into a specialised green job.	In-depth specialised KSBs to support green jobs or job functions that wholly support net zero and nature.

## Quality Assurance

Effective quality assurance is crucial to maintaining the integrity and credibility of green courses, ensuring they deliver true value and align with industry needs. Suggested areas of consideration include:

### **Transparency and Avoiding Greenwashing**

Ensure the green classifications of courses reflect the true content of the course based on the content that is currently delivered. Do not mislabel courses as 'green' to attract funding if they do not currently include the necessary green skills content.

### **Sector-Based Guidance**

Review sector-based research alongside this guidance to ensure any industry changes and recommendations align with the classifications of green courses (i.e., any technological developments). The guidance should provide a firm baseline whilst being flexible enough to align with emerging technologies and evolving industry standards.

### **Involvement Across Roles**

Engage stakeholders across roles - such as curriculum designers, course managers, and quality assurance teams - in applying the guidance. This shared approach ensures that the guidance is embedded consistently across courses and enhances collective responsibility.

## Conclusion

This guidance provides a structured yet flexible framework to support providers and other relevant stakeholders in accurately classifying green courses across the West of England. A planned review process with regional stakeholders and local providers will be carried out to ensure the guidance remains fit for purpose and fulfils its intended aims. This collaborative approach will ensure the framework accommodates the diverse range of courses offered in the region and adapts to evolving green skills requirements in different industries.

The categorisation framework creates a shared language enhancing the region's communication around green course offerings and supporting strategic planning and promotion. By fostering an informed understanding of the guidance, we aim to empower providers to effectively classify their courses and contribute to the region's green skills agenda in a way that is both reliable and adaptable.

The development of this guidance was supported by the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) Team at Business West. If you would like to discuss this guidance in more depth, or provide feedback please contact [jessie.agnew@westofengland-ca.gov.uk](mailto:jessie.agnew@westofengland-ca.gov.uk)

## Resources

### Strategic Documents

[Employment and Skills Plan \(2023\)](#) West of England Mayoral Combined Authority

[Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan \(2023\)](#) West of England Mayoral Combined Authority

[Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy \(2022\)](#) Department for Education

### Useful Tools

[ETF Map the Curriculum Toolkit](#) - The Education and Training Foundation have developed a Map the Curriculum tool to offer a way for providers and practitioners to understand where Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) content is found in their curriculum.

[ETF Leading for Sustainability: a Toolkit for Leaders](#) - The Education and Training Foundation have developed a toolkit designed for leaders and managers, offering case studies, top tips, quick learns and further resources to share current practice, thinking and materials.

[ETF: ESD in subject areas](#) - The Education and Training Foundation offer examples of green content for different curriculum areas

[Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education: Green Toolkit](#) - Toolkit outlining IfATE's approach to green occupations including how to develop specific green skills, knowledge, and behaviours (KSBs).

[Skills Connect - Green Career Insights Pages](#) setting out career pathways, green careers and signposting to relevant support and information.

### Reports:

[Leadership for ESD in the FE Curriculum \(2021\)](#) The Education and Training Foundation

[Experiences of Education for Sustainable Development in the Further Education and Training Sector \(2021\)](#) The Education and Training Foundation

[Green Skills Market Analysis \(2021\)](#) West of England Combined Authority

[West of England and North Somerset LSIP Progress Report 2024 | Business West \(2024\)](#)  
Business West LSIP

[Generation Green Jobs?: Exploring young people's readiness for the Net Zero skills revolution \(2023\)](#) The Prince's Trust

[How to increase the appeal of green skills and training report \(2023\)](#) Nesta