

Sulitest: Sustainability Literacy Test

Sulitest in higher education settings

Content

<i>Why was Sulitest developed?</i>	2
<i>How is Sulitest designed?</i>	2
<i>How can Sulitest be used? Scenarios for Sulitest users</i>	3
Scenario 1: Raise awareness and build knowledge	3
Scenario 2: Raise awareness and put sustainable development on the agenda	3
Scenario 3: Evaluate a programme	4
<i>How to set up a Sulitest?</i>	4

Why was Sulitest developed?

Sulitest (Sustainability Literacy Test) is an international **tool to improve and assess the knowledge, skills and mindsets that are needed to build a sustainable future** and to take informed and effective decisions to that end. The idea for such a tool was born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (the Rio +20 conference) following the observation that many political and economic leaders may not have the basic knowledge needed to make sustainable decisions. It was further developed by the independent non-profit association Sulitest.org, within the framework of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI).

By training current and future decision makers, higher education institutions have a crucial role to play in the pursuit of a sustainable future. Sulitest was created to help higher education institutions, as well as companies and other organisations around the world, ensure that their graduates are aware of and have basic knowledge about global challenges of the 21st century and their shared responsibility in resolving them. In short, Sulitest helps organisations and individuals to contribute to all sustainable development goals (SDGs), and in particular to SDG 4 Target 4.7, which aims to “ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development” by 2030.

How is Sulitest designed?

Sulitest is an **online platform** comprising a great variety of **multiple-choice questions**. The test is characterised by an architecture that ensures a systemic vision with great attention to the interconnectedness of different themes and multi-disciplinary approaches.

Different modules are available. Each Sulitest session consists of at least the core module, on global challenges, and can be complemented by a specialised local module and/or topical module. The **core module** (30 questions) is common to every country and developed by Sulitest.org, a global, independent, non-profit organisation that is supported by more than 40 United Nations partners and international academic networks. The **local modules** (20 specific questions) are developed and validated by Regional and National Expert Committees (RNECs), which are mandated by Sulitest.org. These questions take into account national, regional and cultural specificities (environment, legislative framework and practices) and reflect various key dimensions of sustainable development in specific regions or countries. The **topical modules** (15-20 questions) each touch on a particular issue, such as the SDG framework or SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), and were created in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) or United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Additionally, with premium access (which can be obtained by paying a fee), institutions can create their own **customised modules**.

The [Foundation for Future Generations](#) is mandated by Sulitest.org to establish a [National Expert Committee for Belgium](#). This Committee, guided by a Core Group, has developed a Belgian module representing a set of 28 questions on Belgian specificities. In the process of selecting the topics for these questions, the Committee explicitly opted to build the questionnaire on the SDG framework and to cover each SDG with at least one question.

An algorithm selects questions from the question database, ensuring a variety of issues are covered according to different knowledge types. **The examiner can obtain detailed statistics on participants' test results and compare these to national and international benchmarks.**

Sulitest has **two main modes**: a learning mode and an exam mode. In the **learning mode**, the examiner allows participants to take the test over a long period of time (for example one day or one week). This means that they can pause and resume the test whenever they want to gain and deepen their knowledge or to do some research during the test. The correct answer, as well as valuable additional information and sources, are presented to the participant after each question. In **exam mode**, the participants are given only a limited time (for example one hour) and should all take the test at the same time. In exam mode, the correct answers appear only after completing all the questions. In this case, the test results should reflect individuals' actual knowledge of sustainable development issues. Please see below for technical information on how to set up these different modes. Sulitest.org is investigating the possibility to deliver a Sulitest Certificate for the international core module in the near future soon, to certify sustainability literacy, much like the TOEFL test.

How can Sulitest be used? Scenarios for Sulitest users

Since Sulitest was launched (late 2013) more than 100 000 tests have been taken worldwide and more than 850 universities and organisations, from 67 countries, have registered. Sulitest can be used in different settings and for different objectives. Three main scenarios, which depend on the objective of the user and are based on real Sulitest experiences, are described below. This non-exhaustive list of scenarios presents some possible ways of using Sulitest.

Scenario 1: Raise awareness and build knowledge

At the start of a course (meaning a series of lessons on a particular subject) or a lesson on a sustainability issue, a teacher or professor can use Sulitest (in the learning mode) as an eye opener. Students following this course can take the test individually at home or in small groups in class, potentially as a quiz. While students might already show an interest in and have some knowledge of sustainable development, the Sulitest questions and additional information, will demonstrate the broad variety of sustainable development challenges, the interlinkages between these issues and their complexity. To complete this valuable learning experience, it is key that after taking the test, students are invited to process the acquired information. Such follow-up could be ensured through a paper, a group discussion or a presentation. This moment of reflection and discussion encourages them to use and act upon this new information for the rest of their career.

Scenario 2: Raise awareness and put sustainable development on the agenda

A higher education institution can use Sulitest (in the learning mode) to draw attention to sustainable development. All students, as well as academic, administrative and technical staff, can be asked to take the test individually. In doing so, the institution puts sustainable development high on the agenda. The learning effects are probably less significant without the follow-up session described in scenario 1. However, even without it, the institution sends out a clear and powerful message, stressing the importance of sustainable development.

Scenario 3: Evaluate a programme

At the start and the end of a programme (meaning a complete bachelor's or master's programme) a higher education institution can use Sulitest (in the exam mode) to verify whether this programme has succeeded in promoting the knowledge, skills and mindsets needed to build a sustainable future. All students take the test individually at the same time, before and after completing the programme. This can, of course, be complemented by a follow-up session (as described in scenario 1), depending on the teacher's or professor's objectives. The statistics on the scores of students presented by Sulitest.org provide trends and insights that allow an analysis of the effectiveness of a programme with regard to sustainability knowledge, skills and mindsets. These statistics also allow progress to be monitored as well as results to be compared to those of other programmes at the same institution and to national and international benchmarks. However, it is important to be aware of potential statistical biases, such as the changing sample (not all students that start the programme finish it), learning effects (questions are selected by an algorithm and identical questions might appear in the two tests) and the validity of the test, which is currently being verified for the core module.

Note: The Sulitest core module and local modules are very comprehensive and cover a wide range of aspects. If a teacher or professor wants to use Sulitest to evaluate a single course, a customised module that covers the exact topics discussed during the course is probably more relevant. Such a customised module can be developed in premium access. Before taking the customised module, students are obliged to take the core module, which ensures a systemic understanding of global issues.

How to set up a Sulitest?

1. Register your institution directly via the platform (basic access is free of charge).
2. Designate the examiners, who will receive a code allowing them to access the platform.
3. The examiners can configure their Sulitest sessions (mode, modules, date, duration, etc.).
 - When setting up the test, make sure to click *Status* and select *demo* or *draft* from the list to be able to alter the settings afterwards.
 - To add the Belgian local module, scroll down and check the box *Specialized modules*, select *SPEC Local Belgium* from the list and click *Add this module*.
 - To set up a test in learning mode (Scenario 1 & Scenario 2):
 - modify the start and end date to define the amount of time participants will have to take the test (for example one day or even several weeks);
 - scroll down and modify the display of the answers and additional information:
 - for the core module click *Show advanced settings* and for the *Feedback mode* select *Immediate*;
 - for the specialised Belgian Local Module check the box *Specialized modules*, select *SPEC Local Belgium* from the list, click *Hide/Show details* (🔍 button at the right) and for the *Feedback mode* select *Immediate*.
 - To set up a test in 'exam mode' (Scenario 3):
 - modify the start and end date to define the amount of time participants will have to take the test (for example one hour);
 - scroll down and modify the display of the answers and additional information:

- for the core module, click *Show advanced settings* and for the *Feedback mode* select *Immediate*;
- for the specialised Belgian Local Module check the box *Specialized modules*, select *SPEC Local Belgium* from the list, click *Hide/Show details* (🔍 button at the right) and for the *Feedback mode* select *End of candidate's session*.

4. The new Sulitest session appears in the list of sessions and examiners can *Add candidates* to invite participants to take the test.

5. An access code is sent to all listed participants. Participants register and take the test.

6. The examiners receive detailed statistics on the participants' results.

→ To consult results and compare results to (inter)national benchmarks or other departments in the same institution:

- go to the tab *Create & manage sessions*;
- click *Results* for the relevant session(s);
- compare results of different sessions (e.g.: by exporting them to an Excel spreadsheet).