

Introduction

Planetary Health (PH) and Environmental Sustainability in Healthcare (ESH) emphasise the link between human and planetary wellbeing [1]. Physiotherapy (PT) students must recognise environmental impacts on health and adopt sustainable practices. PT education needs to incorporate these concepts for effective promotion of sustainable healthcare [2].

The Green Heron Award

Anglia Ruskin University's Global Sustainability Institute is piloting the "Green Heron Award" for MSc Physiotherapy courses to:

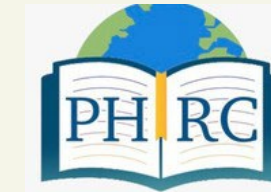
- Recognise sustainability content integration
- Encourage PH and ESH concepts in PT curricula
- Acknowledge excellence via a Digital Badge



Green Heron Audit Development

The audit tool adapts the Planetary Health Report Card (PHRC) [3], evaluating:

1. Curriculum
2. Community Outreach
3. Campus sustainability
4. Interdisciplinary research
5. Student-led initiatives



The PHRC is being adapted by the author of this poster specifically for PT curricula.

This poster summarises the Green Heron audit findings, highlighting PH and ESH integration in PT education.

“Saving the planet is no longer just a scientific challenge but a communications challenge”

– Sir David Attenborough

Scan to access infographics and resources



Aim

Evaluate the integration of Education on Sustainable Healthcare and Planetary Health into the MSc Physiotherapy Curriculum.

Methodology

The Green Heron Audit was developed based on the curriculum section of the Planetary Health Report Card (PHRC), with questions adapted to suit single module evaluation and reflect the Physiotherapy (PT) curriculum. Each module received a raw score, converted to a percentage and assigned a letter grade from E- to A+, aligning with the English grading system. To earn the "Green Heron" a module needed to score above 60%, equivalent to a B- grade. To complement the audit, a focus group of five PT students was conducted, and an interview with the course lead was held. This provided additional insights into student and staff experiences regarding education for sustainable healthcare and planetary health in the PT curriculum.

Module	Letter Grade
Foundations of Physiotherapy Practice	E
Physiotherapy Theory and Practice 1	E-
Physiotherapy Theory and Practice 2	E-
Evidence Based Practice	E-
Preparing for Future Practice	E-
Quality Improvement Project	E-
Overall Physiotherapy Curriculum	D-

Table 1: ARU PT MSc Pre-Registration Green Heron 2024 Final Scores

References: [1] Horton, R., & Lo, S. (2015). Planetary health: a new science for exceptional action. *The Lancet*, 386(10007), 1921-1922
 [2] Bates, O. B., Walsh, A., & Stanistreet, D. (2023). Factors influencing the integration of Planetary health topics into undergraduate medical education in Ireland: a qualitative study of medical educator perspectives *BMJ open*, 13(1)
 [3] Planetary Health Report Card (2024) *The Planetary Health Report Card Initiative*. Available at <https://phreportcard.org/>, (Accessed 24/07/2024)

Discussion and Recommendations

Anglia Ruskin University's (ARU) approach to increasing student and staff engagement has to be praised. The paid intern program to complete Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy audits shows its commitment to developing Education for Sustainable Healthcare. Although outside the remit of this audit, its commitment to sustainable practices such as the £1 Plant-Based meals also deserve praise.

Many of the core principles of Physiotherapy that are taught in the course could be credited if their co-benefits to patients and the environment were highlighted to students. While there are some positive elements, the audit reveals significant room for improvement in integrating planetary health and sustainable healthcare practices into the MSc Physiotherapy curriculum at ARU. However, the institutional level of support appears to be very strong and should help drive rapid improvement if it is maintained.

- Better integrate planetary health topics throughout the core curriculum.
- Provide more explicit links between existing content and sustainability/environmental health.
- Introduce specific training on environmental history-taking and patient communication about climate change.
- Introduce mini sustainability audits for early placements and encourage sustainability-based Quality Improvement projects.
- Designate a faculty member or team to oversee curriculum integration of planetary health topics.
- Deliver sustainability and planetary health CPD to all lecturing staff, to improve buy-in and expertise.

Results

Although no modules were awarded the Green Heron Award, the course did contain content that closely related to sustainability and planetary health, but explicit links were not made to highlight this to students.