

Educating For Sustainable Tourism: Integrating Environmental Management in Tourism Curricula

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Abstract

The growing emphasis on sustainable tourism has intensified expectations on higher education institutions to produce graduates equipped with robust knowledge and skills in environmental management. While sustainability is widely acknowledged within tourism education, the extent to which environmental management is meaningfully integrated into tourism curricula remains uneven and under-examined. This paper presents a systematic literature review that critically synthesises existing scholarship on educating for sustainable tourism by integrating environmental management into tourism curricula. Drawing on peer-reviewed literature published between 2000 and 2025, the review examines how environmental management is conceptualised, embedded, and delivered within tourism and hospitality education, with particular attention to curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and sustainability-oriented competencies. The findings reveal a predominance of conceptual and normative approaches to sustainability, with limited emphasis on applied environmental management skills, such as resource efficiency, waste management, climate adaptation, and circular economy practices. While innovative pedagogies, including experiential learning, problem-based learning, and work-integrated learning, are increasingly evident, their adoption remains inconsistent across institutional and geographical contexts. The paper identifies key gaps between sustainability discourse and curriculum practice and highlights emerging trends signalling a shift toward more transformative, competency-based approaches. By consolidating fragmented literature, this review contributes to tourism education scholarship and provides evidence-based insights for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers seeking to strengthen the integration of environmental management and advance sustainability outcomes in tourism education.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism education, Environmental management, Tourism curricula, Education for sustainable development (ESD), Tourism pedagogy, Sustainability competencies, Curriculum integration