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SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP SCORECARD
ANNUAL REPORT

2020

CONTENTS

Front page image is from Nottingham Trent University as 2019 Green Gown Awards Winner in Outstanding Leadership Team of the Year category.

FOREWORD

We are delighted to present the second annual report on the sector's performance from the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS).

The sector has a transformational 'All in One' tool, which captures data and performance from many sources and builds one definitive picture of an institution's performance. With increasing expectations on universities and colleges to demonstrate responsibility and build organisational adaptability and resilience, it is essential for the sector to report and measure their performance towards becoming net-zero.

The SLS enables a single, engaging indicator of performance and gaps for an institution that is easy to understand and communicate as well as mapping progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2020 has certainly been a challenging year, and it is important to note that the data included in this report was extracted prior to the pandemic.

The climate crisis happens at a global scale and more so, in a world that has experienced numerous challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, a focus on green recovery and climate action is vital. This can only happen with the help of thought-leadership from the education sector across the world and by listening to the student voice and that of the wider sustainability sector. Together, we need to emerge stronger by fostering resilience to future shocks like disease outbreaks and to limit the impacts of climate change.

This report aims to show where the sector is leading and where it needs to improve. With ever increasing stakeholder interest from funders, students, employers and the general public, we know there will be more eyes than ever reviewing institutional performance and improvements. We welcome this scrutiny and are confident that our collaborative and strategic approach to whole-institution sustainability will inspire our sector and give it deserved recognition as a leading the way in the race to net-zero and preparing learners with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in these challenging times.

We hope that the case studies inspire you and your institution to harness the power of the SLS to create real change and actions in meeting your targets and goals.

Overall score diagram for the sector - The breakdown of the tool, with 18 frameworks distributed across four priority areas, can be seen on page 6 (Figure 1).
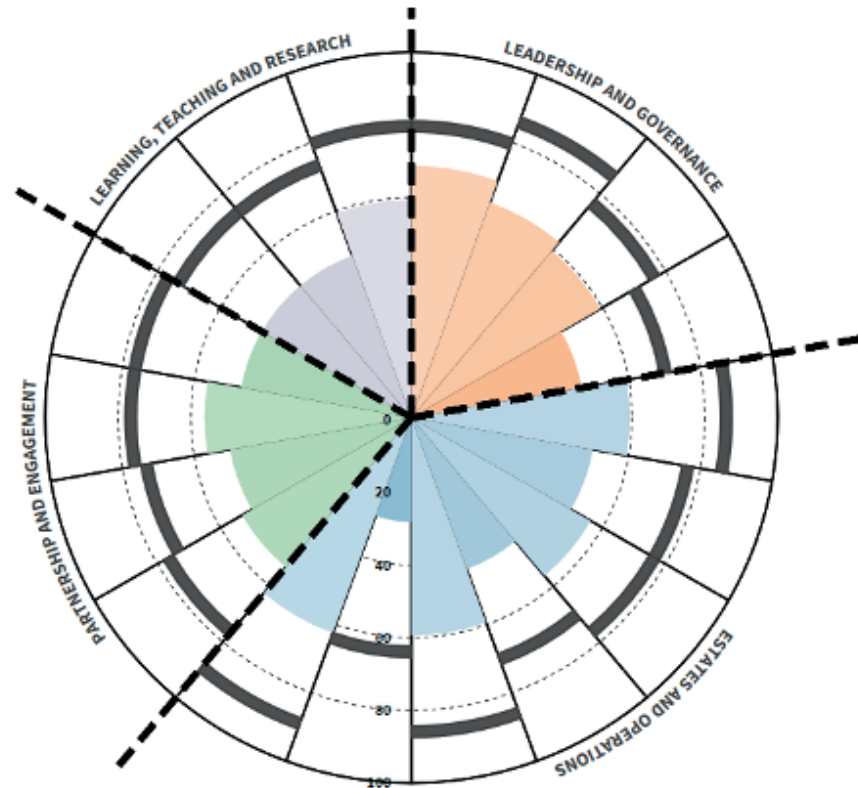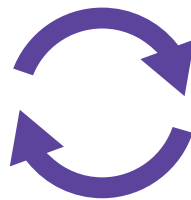
1 KEY FINDINGS

76 institutions are now actively using the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard to assess their current activities and set targets. This is an increase of 69% from our 2019 Annual Report. We welcome institutions outside of the UK to use the tool as a mechanism for change and it is encouraging to see institutions from Australia and the Philippines benefitting.

Also encouraging to see is how users of the tool have found both expected and unexpected benefits of using the SLS as a powerful engagement tool across their institutions. Used to prioritise areas that are often overlooked, fragmented, undervalued, now coming together in a more strategic whole institution approach. To whet your appetite, on the right are a sample of insights identified in this year's report.

Staff Engagement highest in reaching targets

4 INSTITUTIONS IMPROVED TO REACH PLATINUM
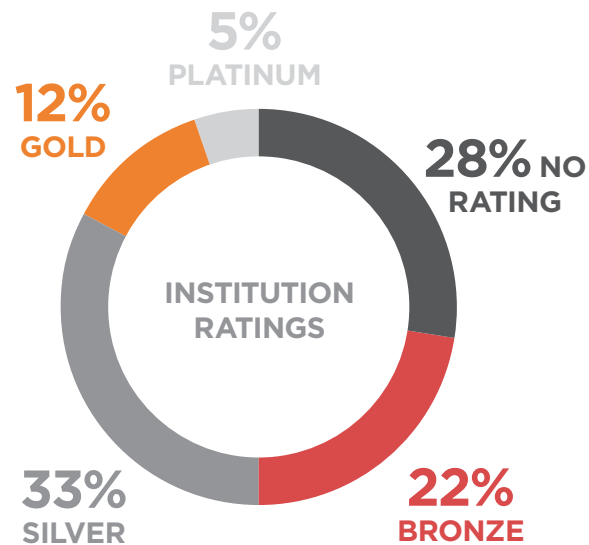
69% increase in participation

There has been a **rise** in **all levels**

Risk is **lowest scoring framework** for the 2nd year in a row

Leadership & Governance **highest scoring areas – with FE leading the way**

INSTITUTION RATINGS

- 5% PLATINUM
- 12% GOLD
- 28% NO RATING
- 33% SILVER
- 22% BRONZE

13 CLIMATE ACTION

Climate Action **highest impact**

Returning participants performing better – showing the tool helps create change and action

Links to curriculum **need to be improved**

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

What was pivotal in you securing senior management authorisation to use the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS)?

The production of the Environment and Climate Emergency (E&CE) White Paper of recommendations to the University, addressing how we should move forward after our declaration of a climate emergency, was a key step in securing senior authorisation to begin submitting to the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS). The paper included the recommendation to use the SLS approach to benchmark, and adopt short term targets in a dedicated E&CE Policy endorsed by individual members of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group (VCEG). This both demonstrates ownership and drives delivery in our progress to facilitate rapid improvement in our sector rankings which will aid us in working towards institutional Goal 4 of the E&CE White Paper– to be a leader in national and international sustainability rankings by 2025.

What was your approach to completing the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard?

We identified a network of key staff members (including academics, researchers, professional services and students) to progress our E&CE work stream areas (20 in all). We also identified leaders across the University for each of the SLS framework areas, including representatives from our Cornwall and Devon campuses to ensure we captured the breadth of work taking place across our institution. Each contributor was responsible for providing details of the current status of their framework against each of the required statements. Our E&CE Benchmarking officer conducted meetings with each contributor to run through

supplied information to validate and evidence a score for each area. On completion of our first SLS submission in Feb 2020 we conducted a gap analysis led by our E&CE Team to identify key areas for improvement, additionally setting a target of a minimum point benchmark for all statements which was reviewed and approved by the Senior Leadership team. We are currently using this to produce a set of actions to deliver our improvement plan, using the 2021 submission as an opportunity to review our progress.

Did you encourage colleagues from other Departments to participate and help you with the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard?

Encouraging colleagues from all departments to participate was a pivotal part of the process of producing our submission to the SLS. In order to produce a detailed and representative report we required engagement from individuals that work on each of the framework areas for both our Exeter and Cornwall campuses. Therefore despite the survey being compiled by the E&CE team, it was important to establish a network of staff members to contribute to this submission, and include them in the action planning/improvement process over the next 12 months. We are looking into a programme of touchpoints with the network of staff throughout the year to improve our capture of progress and evidence.

What are the 3 top benefits of using the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard?

1. **It provides a clear framework for improvement and benchmark of success.**

2. **The report function allows for simple communication of SLS status to senior leadership to show sustainability performance and targets**

3. **It is comprehensive across a wide range of activities relevant to the University operations**

2 INTRODUCTION

In 2018, EAUC and AUDE responded to a call from the then funding body, HEFCE, to create a tool representing a broader definition of sustainability. The Sustainability Leadership Scorecard, created by Arup, was created and launched in the summer of 2018.

Excellent participation was shown in the first full year of the tool being available, with many institutions commenting on its value in creating a structure for addressing a broad sustainability spectrum with a whole-institution approach.

Participation continued to grow the second year, with this report showing some of the trends that the sector is exhibiting based on the data entered into the tool.

It is worth noting that the data this report is based on was extracted from the tool before the extent of the Covid-19 pandemic was evident. As such, the effects of lockdown and other measures are not mentioned in the commentary on the trends. Going forward, it is undoubtable that sustainability efforts within institutions will need to change as a result of the additional pressures brought about by the pandemic. However, it is also clear that actions toward sustainability cannot wait for business-as-usual to be restored. Conversely, we need to use this period of change to make strides towards sustainable institutions, using the recovery process as a catalyst for wider change.

1 AUDE Higher Education Estates Management Report 2019: Summary, insights and analysis of the 2018/2019 academic year.

2.1 TOOL STRUCTURE

As a reminder, the SLS is split into four priority areas, with a number of frameworks (18 in total) providing dedicated topics within these priorities (Figure 1). As a result of this breadth, the tool examines an institution's potential impact in the area of sustainability beyond the direct impact of its estate. It allows an institution to understand their current performance in the context of their priorities and set their aspirations for future performance. The tool is supported by an easy-to-use web-portal.

The SLS tool draws directly from the annual Estates Management Return (EMR) dataset completed by universities. This provides an invaluable source of information on sector performance. By linking in with the EMR, the tool reduces workload and maximises the value of the existing processes.

For more information on EMR and the performance of the HE sector, a full analysis report is available[1] .

Figure 1: Structure of frameworks and priority areas

Leadership and Governance

Leadership | Staff Engagement and Human Resources | Health and Wellbeing | Risk

Partnership and Engagement

Community & Public Engagement | Business & Industry Interface | Procurement & Supplier Engagement | Food & Drink

Learning, Teaching & Research

Learning & Teaching | Research | Student Engagement

Estates & Operations

Waste | Biodiversity | Construction | Water | Travel | Adaptation | Energy

What was pivotal in you securing senior management authorisation to use the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS)?

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) assisted with the development of the tool and supported with an initial pilot. It was recognised that the SLS can be used as one of the tools to support NTU's strategy. The tool assists with identifying areas of strength and weakness across the University with regards to embedding sustainability.

What was your approach to completing the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard?

Having achieved gold in the LiFE Index, the pre-runner to SLS, much of the data had been transferred over ahead of when we participated in the pilot. The approach of completing the SLS this time, was to review previous data, which was readily available on login. Following this, each of the Frameworks within the four key priority areas were reviewed so that the score previously given could be revised, according to progress made in that area, since the last submission. It was important for NTU this year to support any change in scores with comments and evidence. On the activities with pre-determined scores from the selection of 'Other Tools' we still reviewed the criteria to determine if the score was appropriate or not and amended where necessary.

Did you encourage colleagues from other Departments to participate and help you with the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard?

For the 2019/20 submission we engaged with our Deputy Vice-Chancellor - Research and Innovation and Interim Pro Vice Chancellor – Education. The Sustainable Development Team had much of the operational data available, from submitting to other external benchmarking frameworks.

What are the 3 top benefits of using the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard?

1. **Identifying other tools that can be selected to contribute to the current score e.g. implementation of ISO14001 and Flexible Framework.**

2. **Pre population scores given based on 'other tools' in place is useful as a 'starting point'.**

3. **Reference and mapping to the SDGs**

3 PARTICIPATION

3.1 OVERALL ENGAGEMENT

In the second year since the tool was launched in June 2018, there have been 76 institutions actively participating in the use of the tool[2]. This includes 69 (44%) of the UK's HE institutions and 7 FE institutions. All institutions that participated in the first year of the tool, also participated in the second year, with an additional 27 new HE institutes and 4 new FE institutes. A full list of participating universities can be found in section 9, including a list of all new participants for the most recent year.

Participation is still heavily weighted towards universities rather than FE colleges. However, the pressures and drivers within each sector continue be very different so this should not be surprising. Previously, issues such as budget pressures and a lack of consideration of sustainability in OFSTED appraisals have been suggested as contributory factors. That the FE colleges who engaged in the first year are still using the tool indicates that they derived benefit from the exercise which is encouraging.

Figure 2: Participation levels
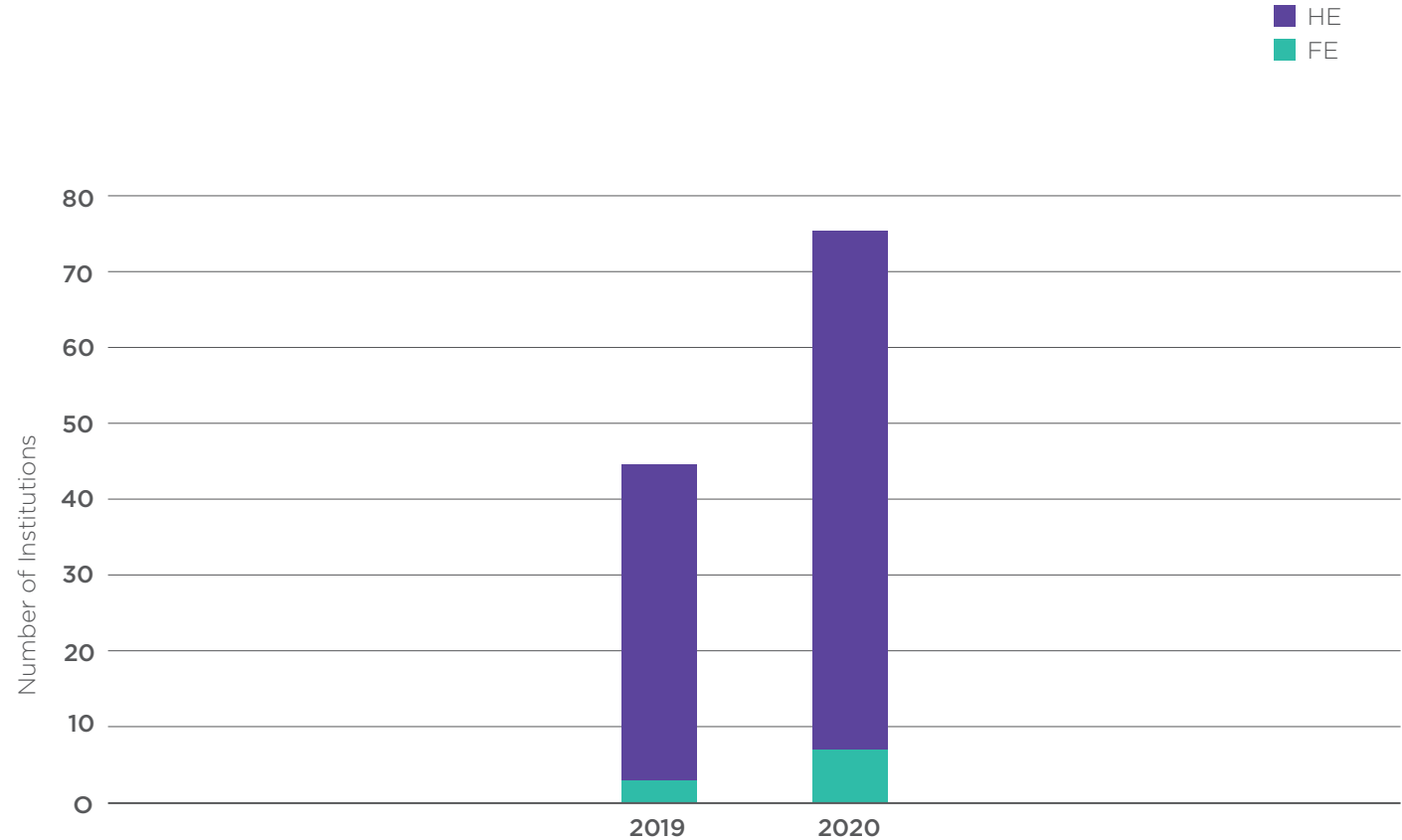
2 This data only considers institutions that have manually entered at least 10 scores, the threshold set to indicate meaningful participation. More institutions have entered fewer scores and all universities have data carried into the SLS from the annual Estates Management Return.

Similarly to the previous year, the majority of institutions are setting a similar number of targets to the number of scores recorded, as shown by the close proximity to the diagonal line in Figure 2 which represents a 1:1 ratio of scores and targets. This suggests that institutions are still using the tool to set targets as well as track their progress.

New this year is a cluster of institutions engaging with a relatively small number of scores, indicating that a number of those new to the tool are initially engaging only in ways that are of the greatest importance to them. Conversely, though, there is also a greater cluster of institutions that are engaging with almost all of the frameworks, suggesting that the breadth of an institution's engagement increases over time.

Figure 3: Relationship between numbers of scores and targets entered
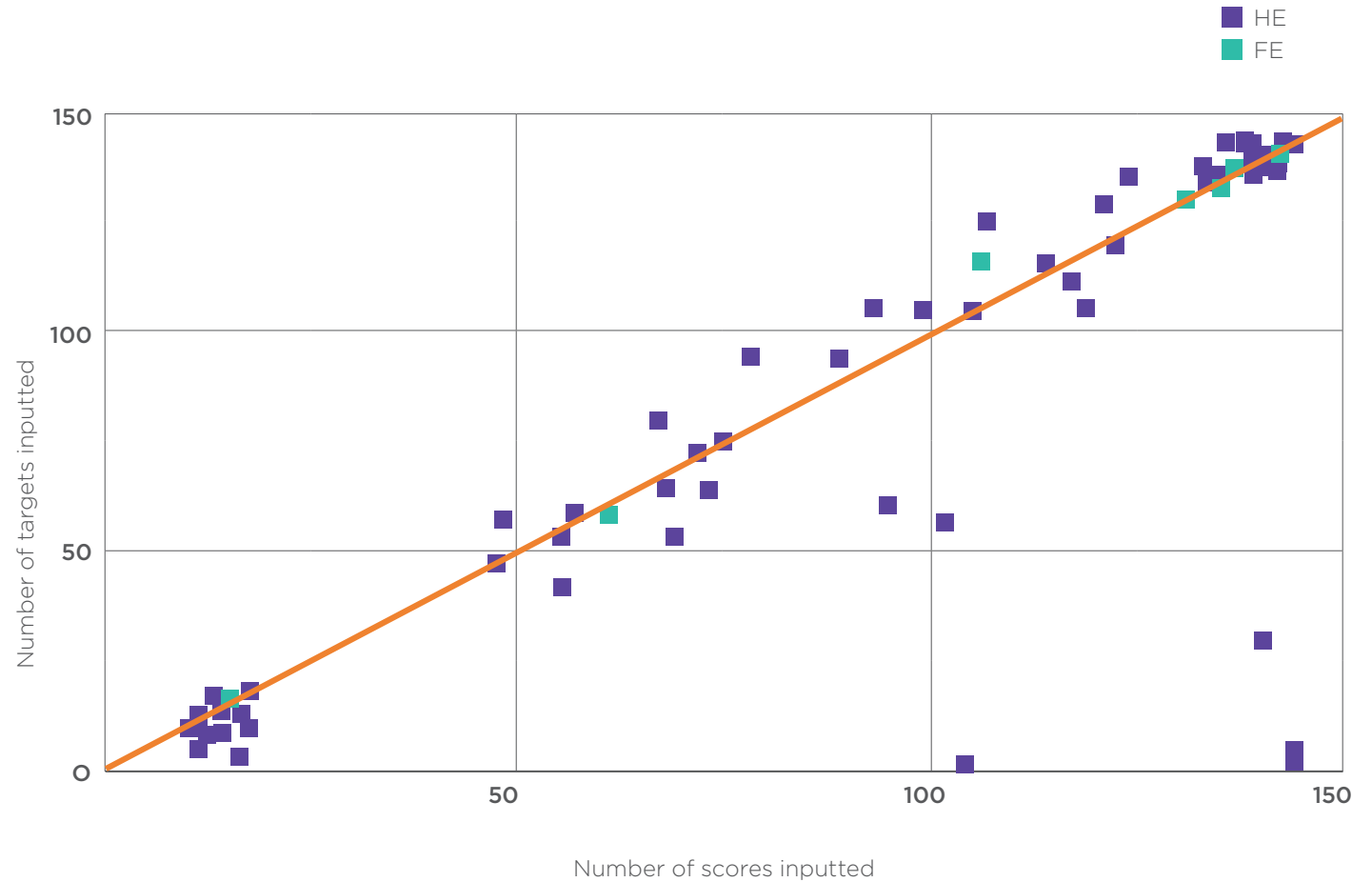
As previously shown, there has been an increase in use of the tool across both the HE and FE sector. The increase in uptake of the tool among universities has occurred across all university types when compared to last year (when size and research/teaching balance is considered).

Large institution participation has increased from 34% to 54%, and small institution has almost doubled from 15% to 29%. However, participation rates amongst small teaching institution is still low. Their similarity to FE colleges mean that there is the potential for future developments of the tool to cater for both these sub-sectors to significantly increase the usefulness of the tool (and therefore participation).

Figure 4: Participation by university type
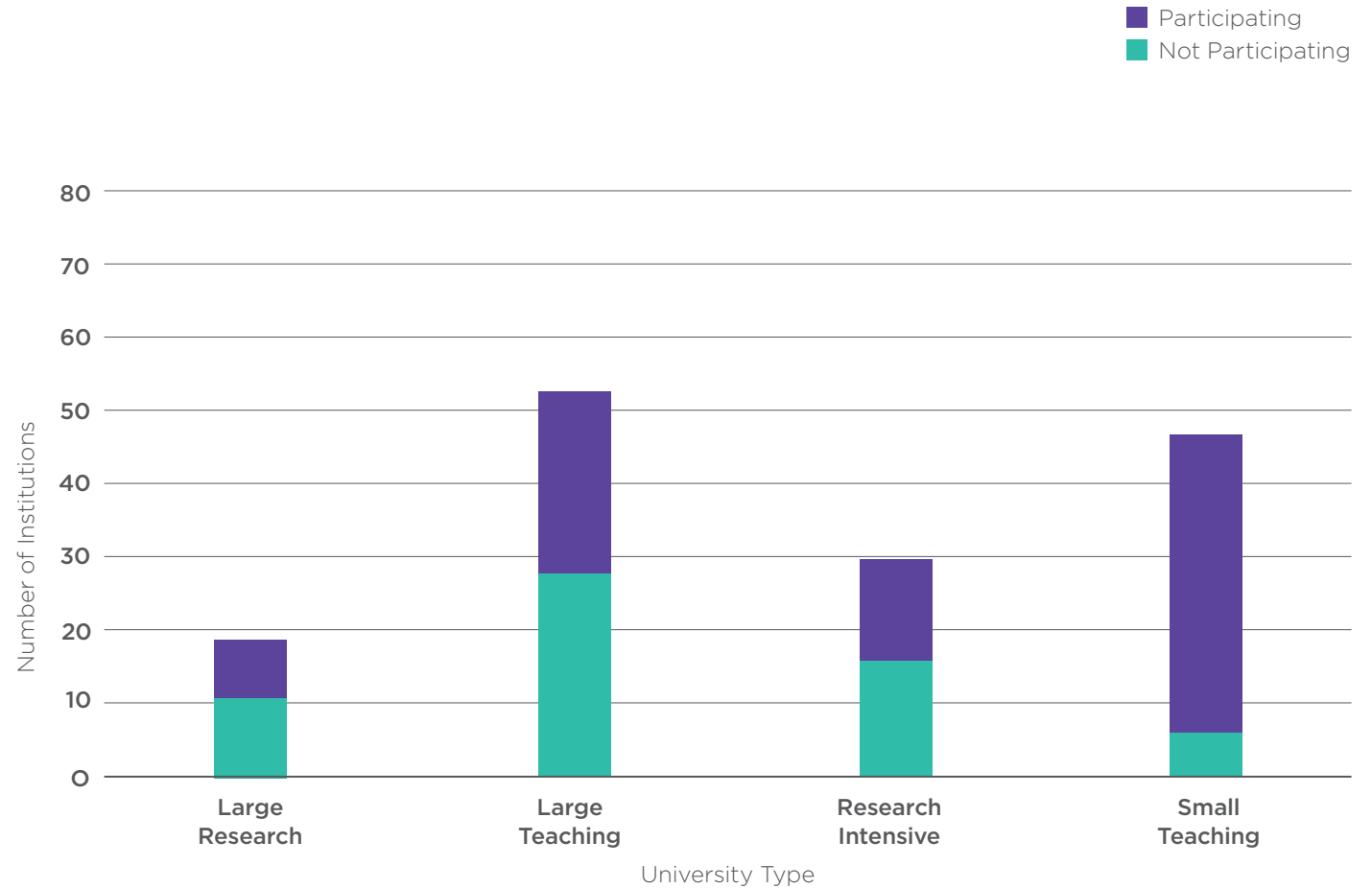
3.2 PARTICIPATION BY REGION

Engagement with the tool has increased across almost all regions since last year (colleges are excluded from this geographical analysis due to the low numbers involved).

Increases in participation have been most marked in the North West (increasing from 31% to 54%), South West (17% to 42%) and in London and the South East (19% to 34%). This almost doubling in participation in and around London is particularly significant due to the high numbers of institutions in the region.

It was commented last year that it was unlikely that the location of institutes would affect their level of engagement with the tool – it more being an artefact of the type of institutes within a region. However, as institutions have compared and discussed results over the intervening year, there is every chance that their decisions to participate is being influenced by the comments coming from their local peers and networks on their experience of using the tool.
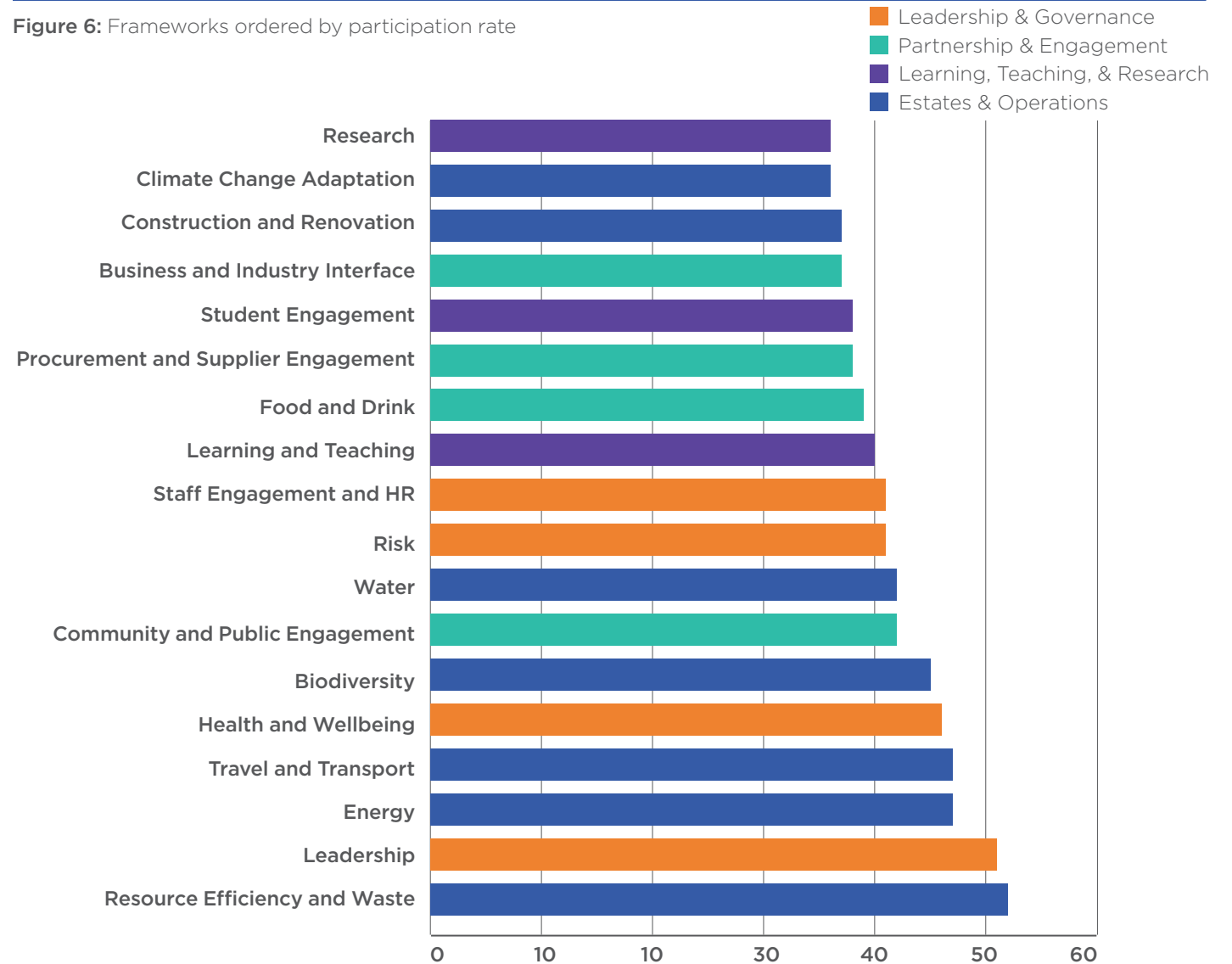
Figure 5: HE participation by geographical area
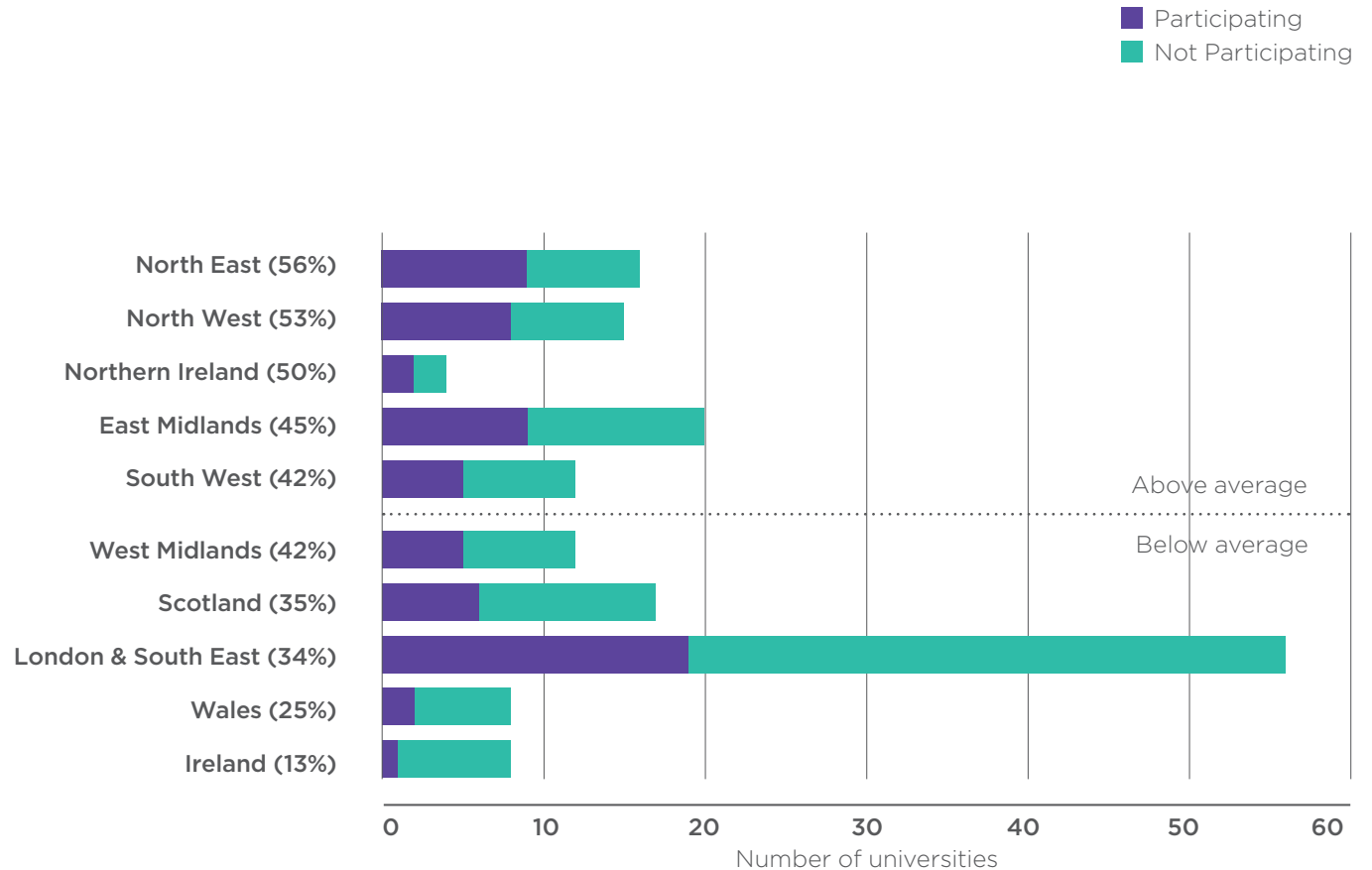
3.3 PRIORITY AND FRAMEWORK AREAS

Similarly to last year, we are seeing good coverage of frameworks being completed, confirming the view that each of the frameworks is relevant to a wide range of onstitutions. Compared to last year, though a number of frameworks' popularity as changed significantly. The Research and Learning & Teaching frameworks are now significantly further down the list of frameworks when ordered by engagement (Figure 6). The Research framework is now the least popular. Given the practical difficulties with making changes to entire research and/or teaching programmes, it is not surprising that these are not some of the highest performing areas but the change year-on-year is significant.

Conversely, the frameworks concerning Procurement & Supplier Engagement and Food & Drink have become more popular. These areas might be considered the next targets for sustainability initiatives once some of the more controllable elements of an institution's impact have had processes put in place (such as energy, waste and transport, for example).

Estates and Operations is still, unsurprisingly, the most popular priority area but the frameworks of Climate Change Adaptation and Construction & Renovation are now clear outliers. Adaptation has been a consistent poor performer since the very first day of the Green Scorecard showing attention is needed to this vital area. The lack of participation in the Construction & Renovation framework could indicate that, whilst estates teams are adept at including sustainability issues into on-going operational issues, they are struggling to effectively integrate requirements into complex new buildings and renovation projects.

Figure 6: Frameworks ordered by participation rate

Legend:
- Leadership & Governance
- Partnership & Engagement
- Learning, Teaching, & Research
- Estates & Operations

Charles Sturt University

What was pivotal in you securing senior management authorisation to use the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS)?

Charles Sturt University adopted the Learning in Future Environments (LiFE) Index in 2012 and the SLS tool sits behind this. We didn't need to secure senior management 'authorisation' to use SLS as we haven't advertised the fact that we use this platform. We didn't want to confuse our stakeholders.

As sustainability practitioners, we are interested in the disciplines of the different sustainability models (e.g. LiFE, SLS and STARS) used by our peers internationally. Our use of SLS is not included in our key messages. We focus on promoting sustainability through the LiFE Index, our carbon neutrality status as the first certified tertiary intuition in Australasia and through the SDGs.

What was your approach to completing the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard?

Charles Sturt undertakes a highly participatory process to identify and implement actions to progress us towards best practice across the priority areas of SLS and LiFE.

We undertake a schedule of six monthly workshop check-ins with stakeholder groups known as 'LiFE champions'. Annually we review the ratings for each of the (16) frameworks and upload the quantitative results onto the SLS platform. We benchmarked all frameworks in 2016 and started uploading SLS scores in 2018.

There are several frameworks in SLS that sit outside the LiFE Index including: Health and wellbeing; Risk; Food and drink (we address as part of resource efficiency and waste); and Climate change adaptation (addressed through energy). We conduct more informal discussions with key stakeholders to rank progress towards best practice.

Did you encourage colleagues from other Departments to participate and help you with the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard?

Yes absolutely. CSU Green staff coordinate and facilitate the consultation process, but our champions and stakeholders are the subject matter experts.

In 2016 number of engagement with champions was 106 which climbed to 174 by the end of 2019. We involve general, professional and academic staff across all divisions and faculties as well as students in our participatory workshops.

What are the 3 top benefits of using the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard?

1. **Allows easy alignment with LiFE best practice criteria and acknowledges other accredited systems – it is an inclusive platform.**

2. **Demonstrates an institution's automatic contribution towards the SDGs which can assist in our annual reporting.**

3. **The platform is quick, intuitive and easy to use. The visual tools are very appealing and it is very useful to allow comparisons between years and providing details on other high performing tertiary institutions. This forms the basis of expanding our global sustainability networks.**

4 OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Overall, the average score this year was 2.1 out of 4 (54%), almost identical to that seen last year and still lying close to the Bronze / Silver rating boundary. The majority of institutions are still achieving at least a Bronze rating (Figure 7). Encouragingly, where previously no institute achieved a Platinum rating, 4 institutes achieved this highest level this year.

Figure 7: Overall performance of institutions
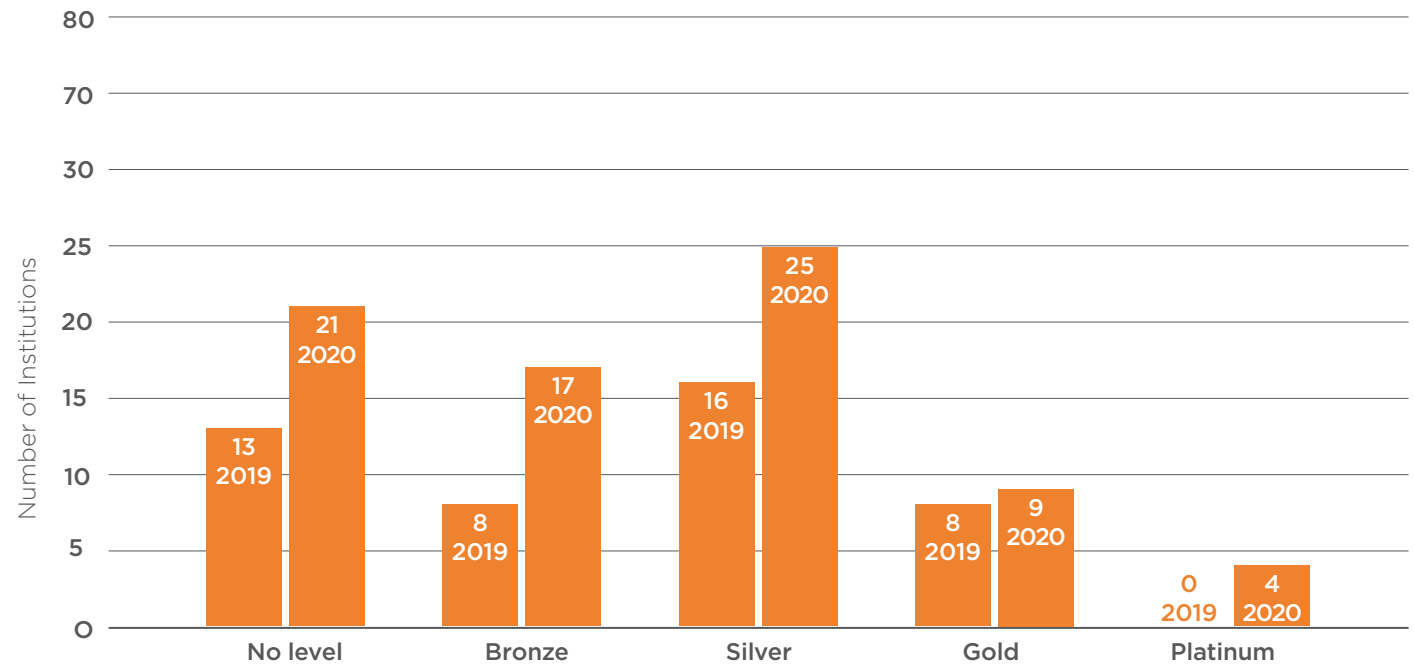
However, this overall trend masks an underlying difference between returning and new participants. Returning participants had a rating profile more heavily weighted towards above average-, mid- and high-level ratings. As can be seen from Figure 8, new participants were more likely to have lower ratings.

This is very encouraging as it means the tool is reaching institutions that have a slightly less mature plan to integrate sustainability elements across their operations. In these institutions, the tool has an even greater capacity to catalyse improvements. They should be applauded for engaging rather than having their performance compared with early adopters

Figure 8: Differing performance of new and returning participants
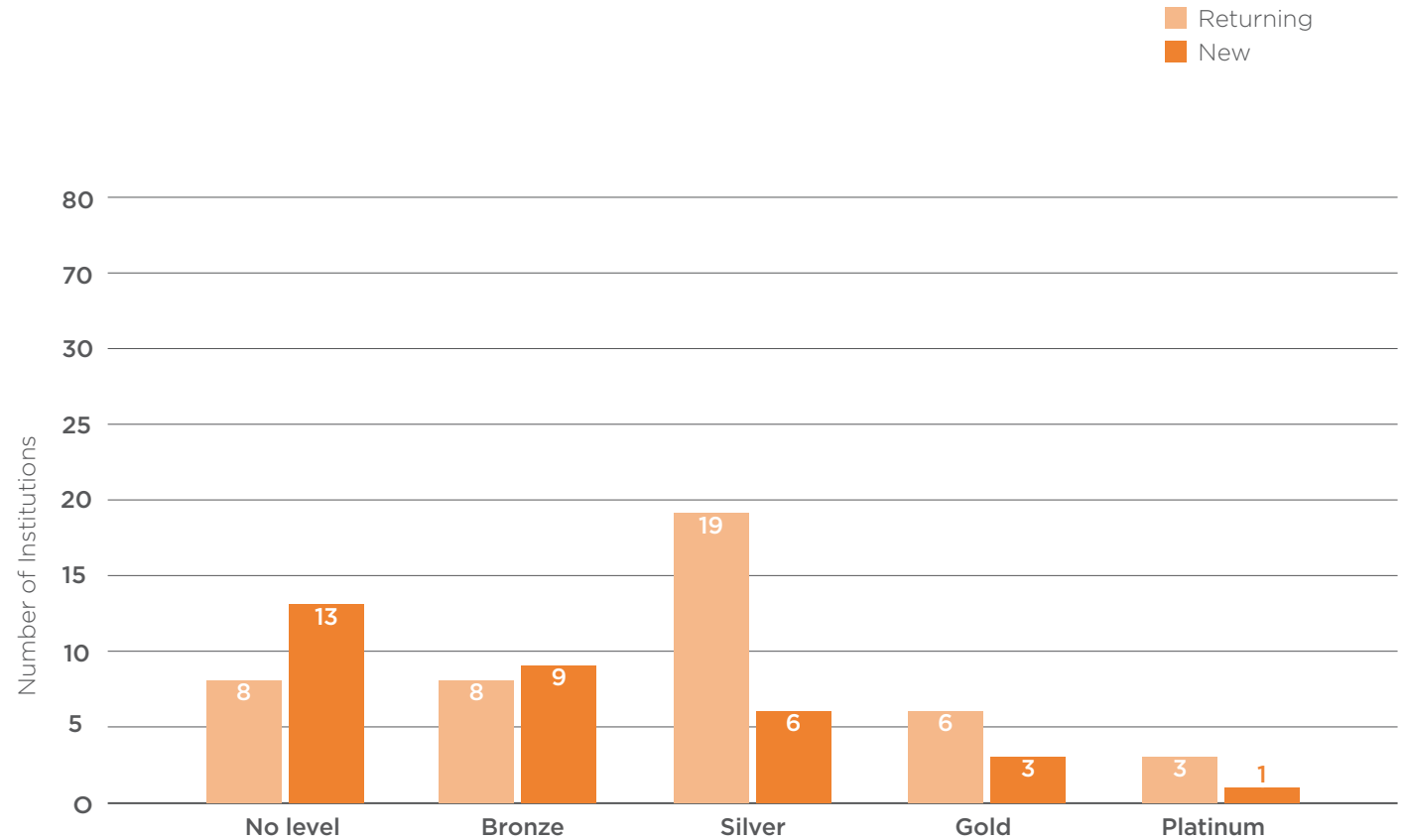
It should be remembered that the higher number of institutes not achieving a rating could be due to institutions not appraising themselves against many of the frameworks. Therefore, a low average score does not necessarily mean that these institutions are not achieving high standards on the issues that are important to them. This links back to the earlier analysis that shows some new institutions are considering a smaller number of frameworks (Figure 3).

Whilst these scores are useful to show the progress of the sector as a whole, it is not necessarily useful to compare institutions at this overall score level as sustainability is individual to the priorities and characteristics of each individual organisation. Which institution scores the highest is of less relevance than whether each is improving. It is this improvement that the optional gap analysis or score verification process available as part of the SLS is intended to confirm.
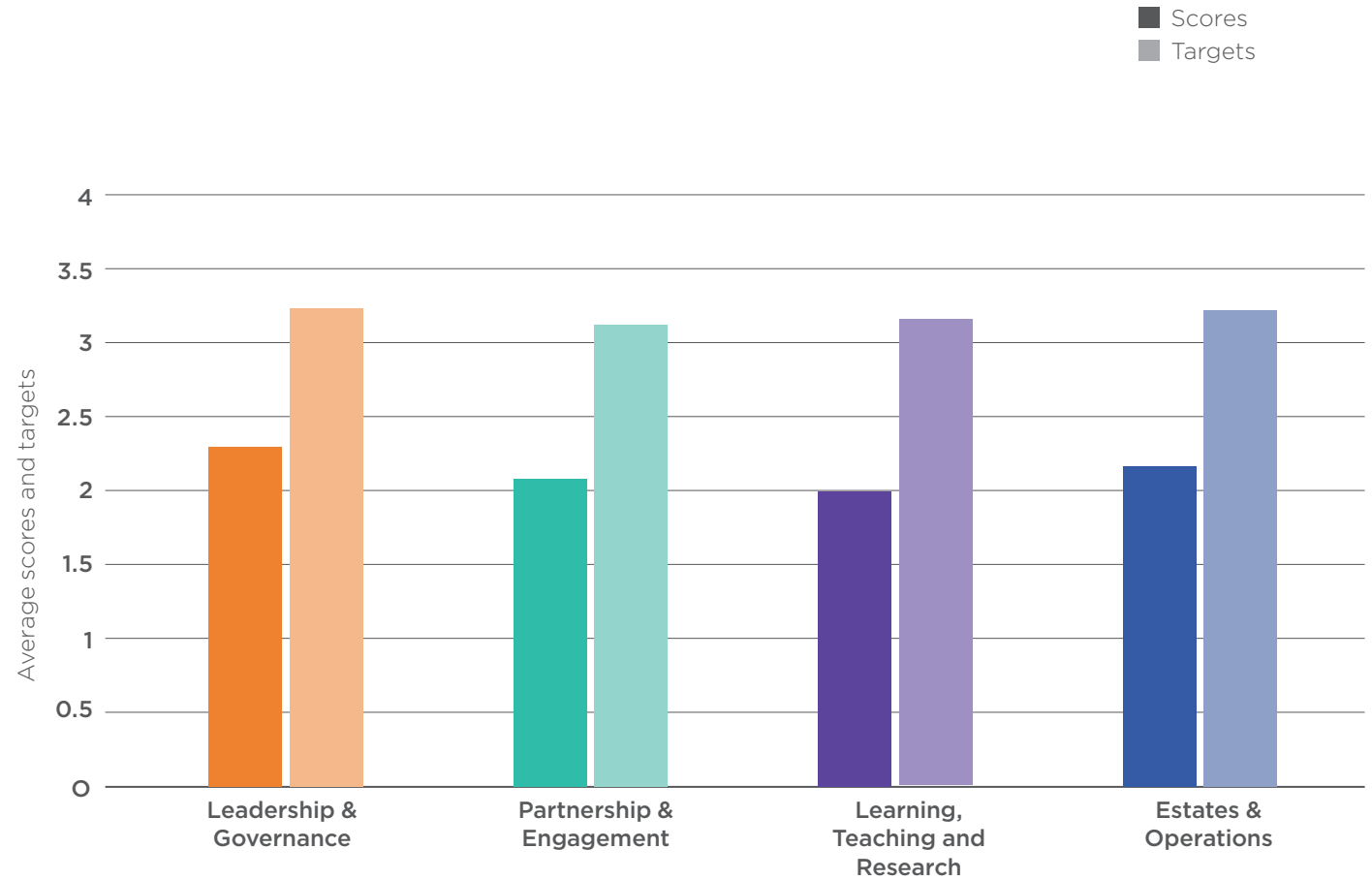
Figure 9: Overall performance of the sector
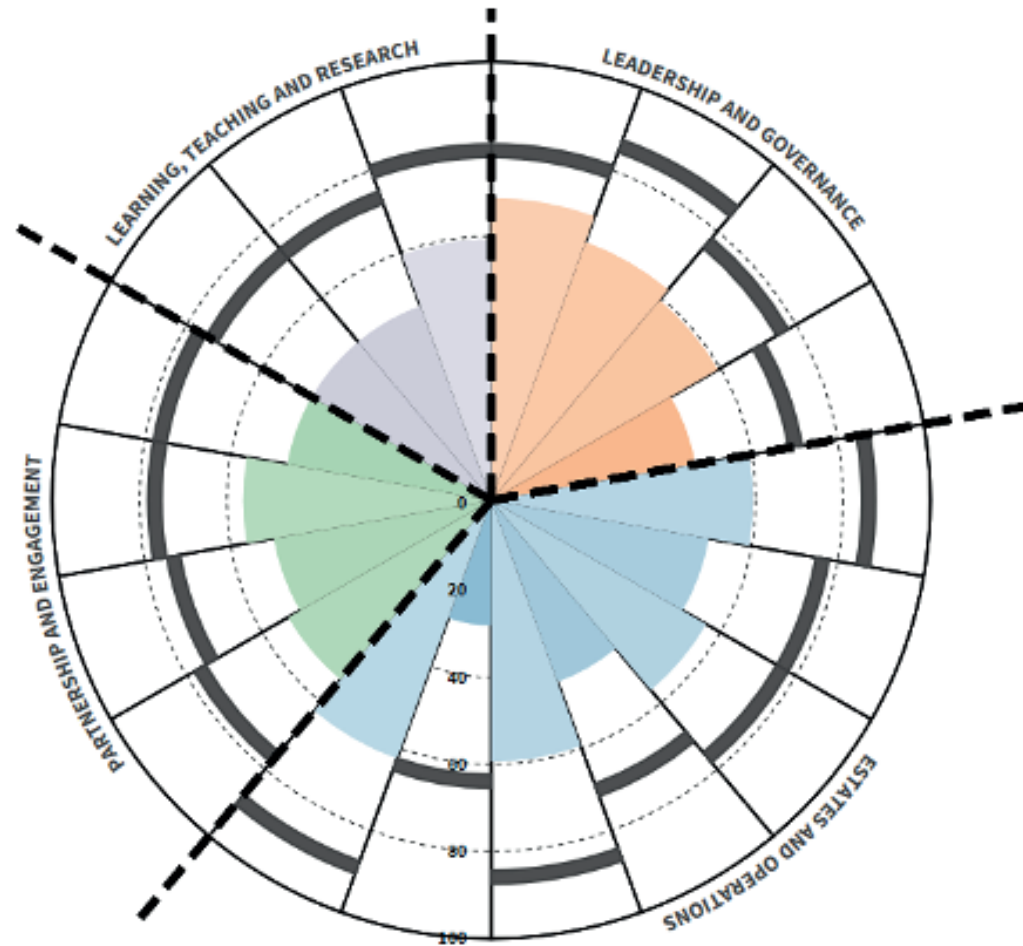
4.1 PRIORITY AREAS

The average scores across the four priority areas range from 2.0 to 2.3, with the highest average score being in the Leadership and Governance priority area. This shows similarities to last year's results.

Figure 10: Overall priority area performance

INSTITUTION TYPES

On average, larger institutions have higher scores than smaller institutions but there are interesting trends within the figures when individual priority areas are examined (Figure 11).

As with last year, FE colleges perform exceptionally well within the Leadership & Governance priority area showing that having likely smaller budgets and teams dedicated to sustainability issues is not an insurmountable barrier to excellence in some areas.

Large research institutions continue to perform well, perhaps as a result of having focussed on the issue for slightly longer than others. They are still strong performers in Learning, Teaching & Research but have lost last year's strong performance in Partnership Engagement. However, last year's dataset of large research institutions was small (at five) so perhaps this year's results are more indicative of true performance.

Figure 11: Performance variation by institution type

Legend:
- Large Research
- Large Teaching
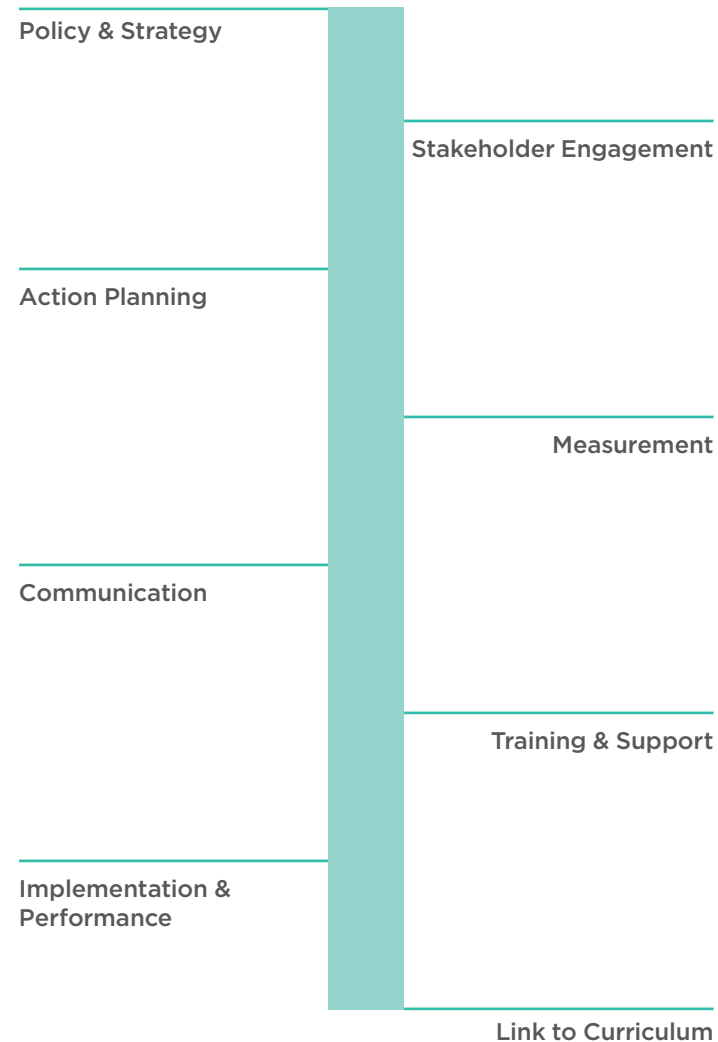- Research Intensive
- Small Teaching
- College
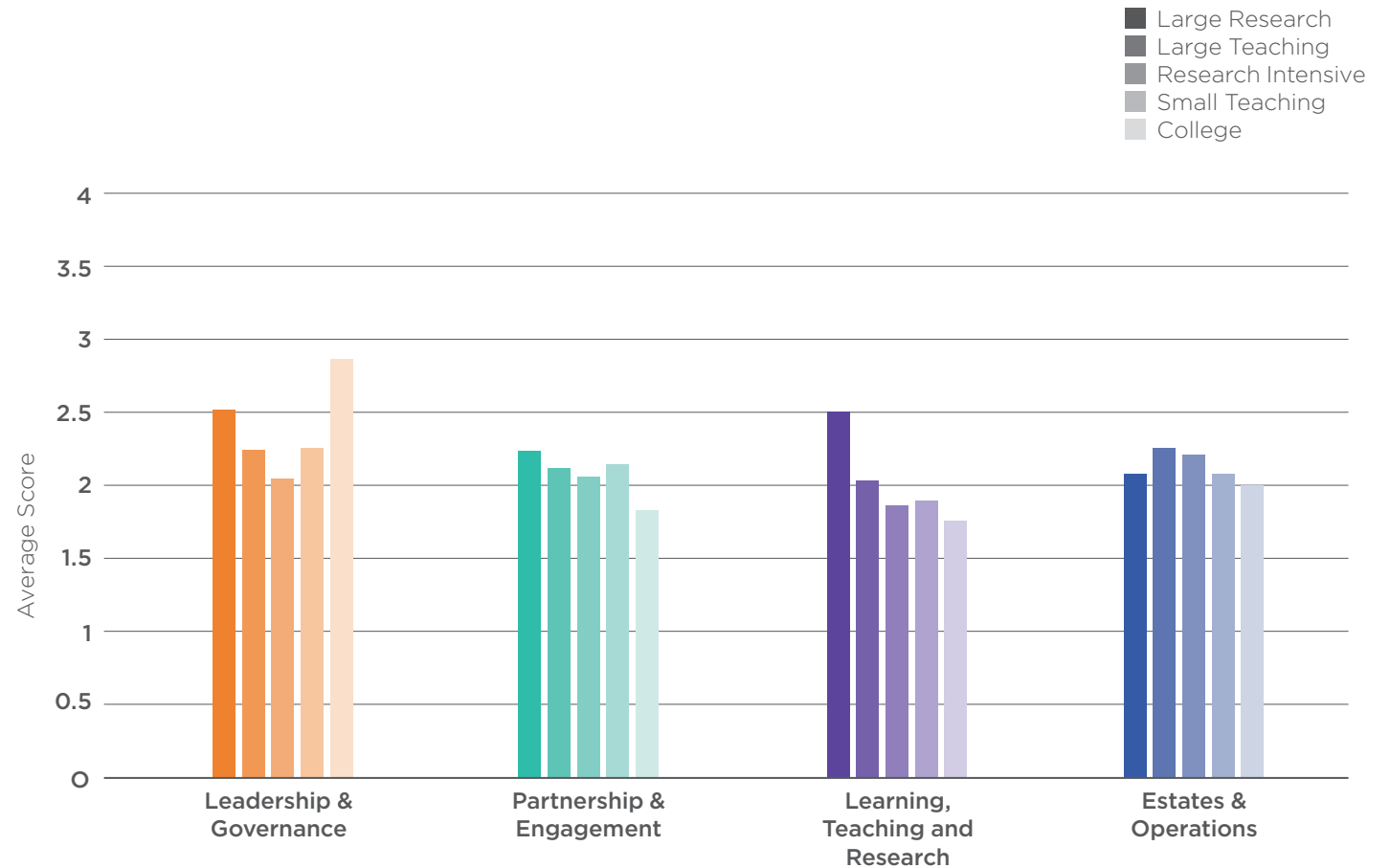
4.2 ACTIVITIES

Within each of the frameworks of the SLS, institutions appraise themselves against the same eight activities. The activities are not designed to be strictly linear but there is a logical flow that institutions might follow (Figure 12).

As with last year, there is a marked difference in performance between the Link to the Curriculum activity area and the other seven. On average, the seven other activities score 2.2 out of 4. For Link to the Curriculum, this score drops to 1.5. This difference is much greater than the variance seen across the other areas and a full half a point lower than the next lowest performing activity.

However, the fact that this trend has changed little should not be of surprise. Of all the activities, it is perhaps the one that requires a greatest scale of change and so will naturally occur more slowly.

That said, the fact that this activity has the potential to significantly multiply the impact of efforts in other areas means that it should continue to be an area institutions focus on.

Figure 12: Activity areas

Policy & Strategy

Stakeholder Engagement

Action Planning

Measurement

Communication

Training & Support

Implementation & Performance

Link to Curriculum

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE

What was pivotal in you securing senior management authorisation to use the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS)?

North East Scotland College (NESCol) has already made several ongoing commitments to sustainability. Sustainability issues at NESCol are frequently discussed and supported by senior management through the College's BSI ISO14001:2015 and BSI ISO50001:2018 accreditations. These accreditations are embedded throughout all campuses and courses. The SLS was simply another step forward in this process and the value of engaging in the SLS was fully recognised.

This coupled with our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals Accord meant that we could demonstrate that the SLS would assist the College in meeting its ongoing commitments. Moving forward the tool will enable us to recognise further risks and opportunities through high level strategic reporting.

What was your approach to completing the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard?

The Environmental and Sustainability Manager (ESM) took the lead on completing the SLS. The ESM works closely with all departments and has knowledge of all operations at all campuses through running with both management systems and the SDG Accord.

Did you encourage colleagues from other Departments to participate and help you with the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard?

Information was gathered from other departments where necessary but most information was collated by the Environmental and Sustainability Manager based on the knowledge of other departments. Moving forward we would get more people involved. All our policies, procedures and strategies are available on line which ensures information from other departments is fully accessible.

What are the 3 top benefits of using the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard?

1. The SLS highlighted areas where more focus is required and enabled us to see where it can fit in with what we are already doing whilst highlighting the importance of getting everyone to work together to meet our goals.

2. The SLS gave us a wider view of all influencing factors in sustainability which linked in very well with the SDG Accord commitments. It highlighted the importance of the wider sustainability issues and how they interconnected with all aspects of the College.

3. Provided a good visual summary of our progress.

5 TOOLS MAPPING

The SLS includes the ability for institutions to identify other tools and methodologies relating to sustainability issues that they are already using. The use of this feature decreased this year where only 89 counts of the tools were recorded compared to 147 last year. However, this still indicates the most popular external tool is BREEAM, but only 32% of participants used this tool this year compared to 64% of participants last year.

However, it was only ever intended that the mapping to the tools would give institutions an indicative level for their scoring before they adopted more accurate appraisals. Perhaps the fact that the use of this facility is reducing means that institutions see less of a need for this assistance as they become more accustomed to the tool.

Figure 13: Use of external tool mapping
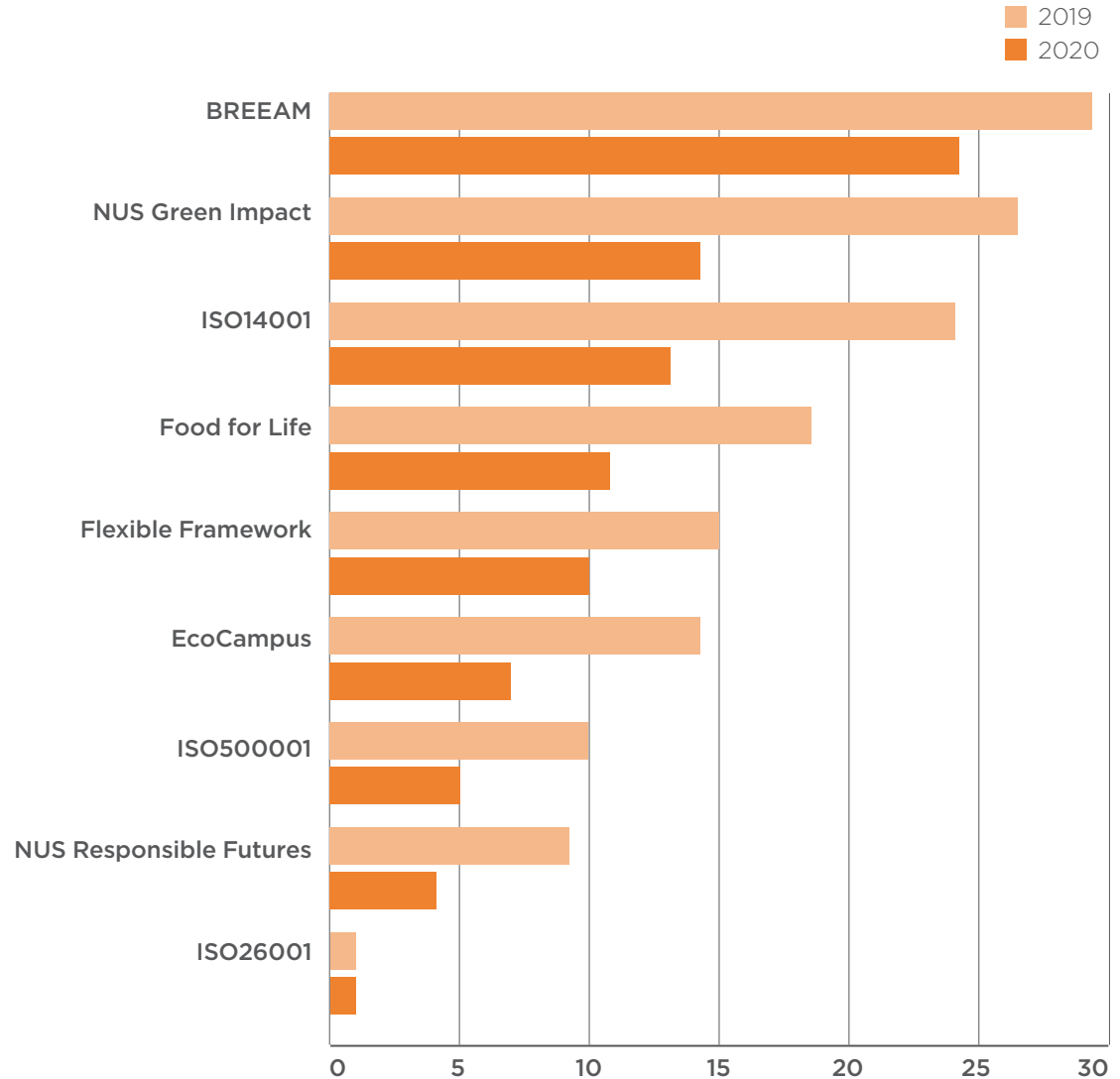
6 PRIORITY AREAS

6.1 LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

OVERALL

Within the Leadership and Governance priority area, Risk is the lowest scoring framework for the second year in a row (Figure 14). This suggests that significant actions are not being taken to reduce institutions' involvement with organisations that do not align with the sustainable development principles. However, the difference is not quite as large as last year so it would appear progress is being made.

The Risk framework aims to assess the issues of responsible investment and divestment from organisations whose operations or activities are not commensurate with sustainable development principles.

The highest scoring framework within this priority area is Staff Engagement and Human Resources. This framework is also closest to reaching its target, suggesting this is an area many institutes are focusing on.

Leadership and Governance

Leadership | Staff Engagement and Human Resources | Health and Wellbeing | Risk

Figure 14: Frameworks within Leadership & Governance

Legend:
- 2019 Target
- 2020 Target
- 2019 Score
- 2020 Score
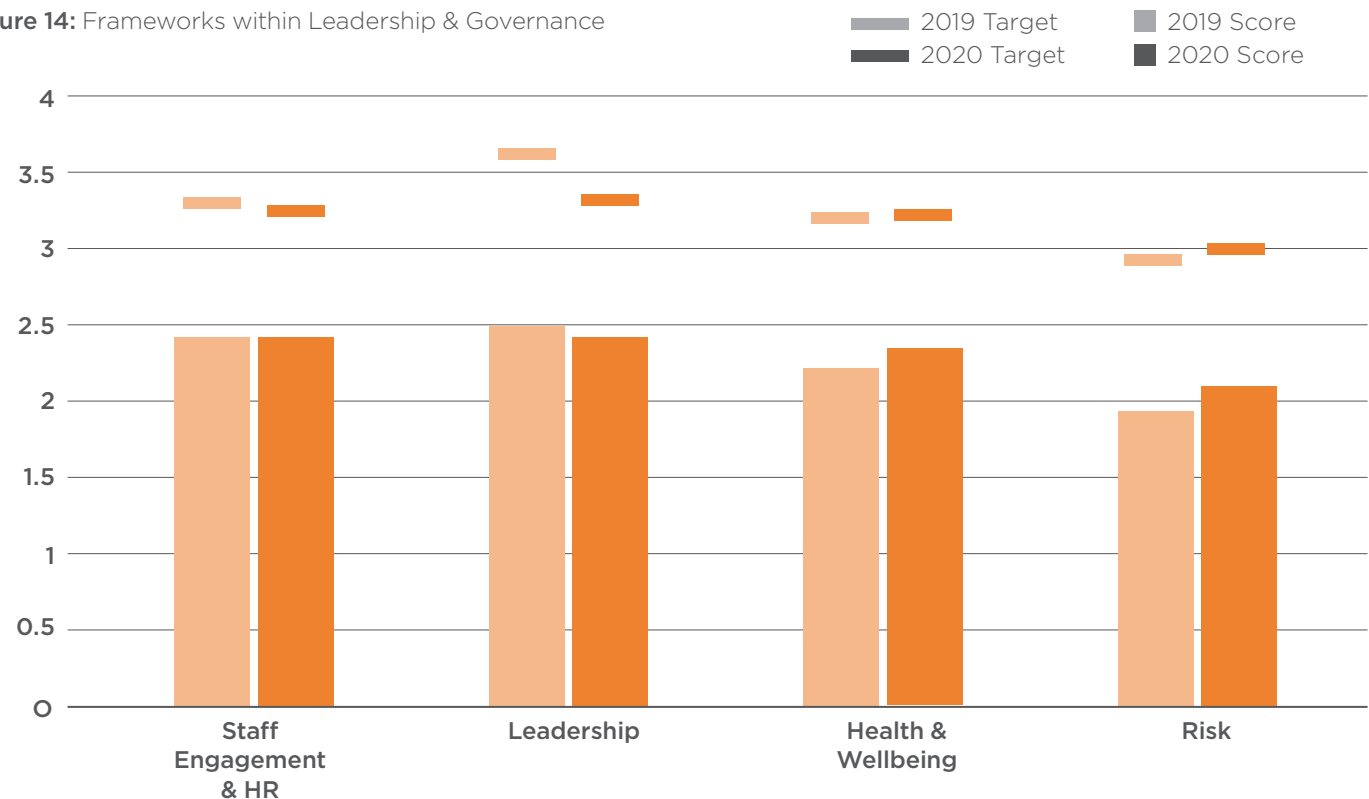
When compared with last year, the Leadership framework in this priority area saw the greatest reduction in target levels of any framework, dropping from 3.6 to 3.4 when most others saw an increase.

This priority area has an above-average score which is also reflected in the distribution of ratings achieved (Figure 15 – the horizontal bars represent the ratings achieved when all four priority areas are considered).

A significantly higher number of institutions achieved an average score within the band for a Gold rating. This means that, within the five descriptions of performance for each activity, institutions are, on average, considering their performance to be in the second-highest category.

Given the essential and central nature of Leadership and Governance to the effective and long-lasting integration of sustainability into an institution's systems and ethos, this is incredibly heartening and it is worth reiterating the strong performance of FE Colleges in this area.

Leadership and Governance

Leadership | Staff Engagement and Human Resources | Health and Wellbeing | Risk

Figure 15: Ratings achieved in L&G priority area
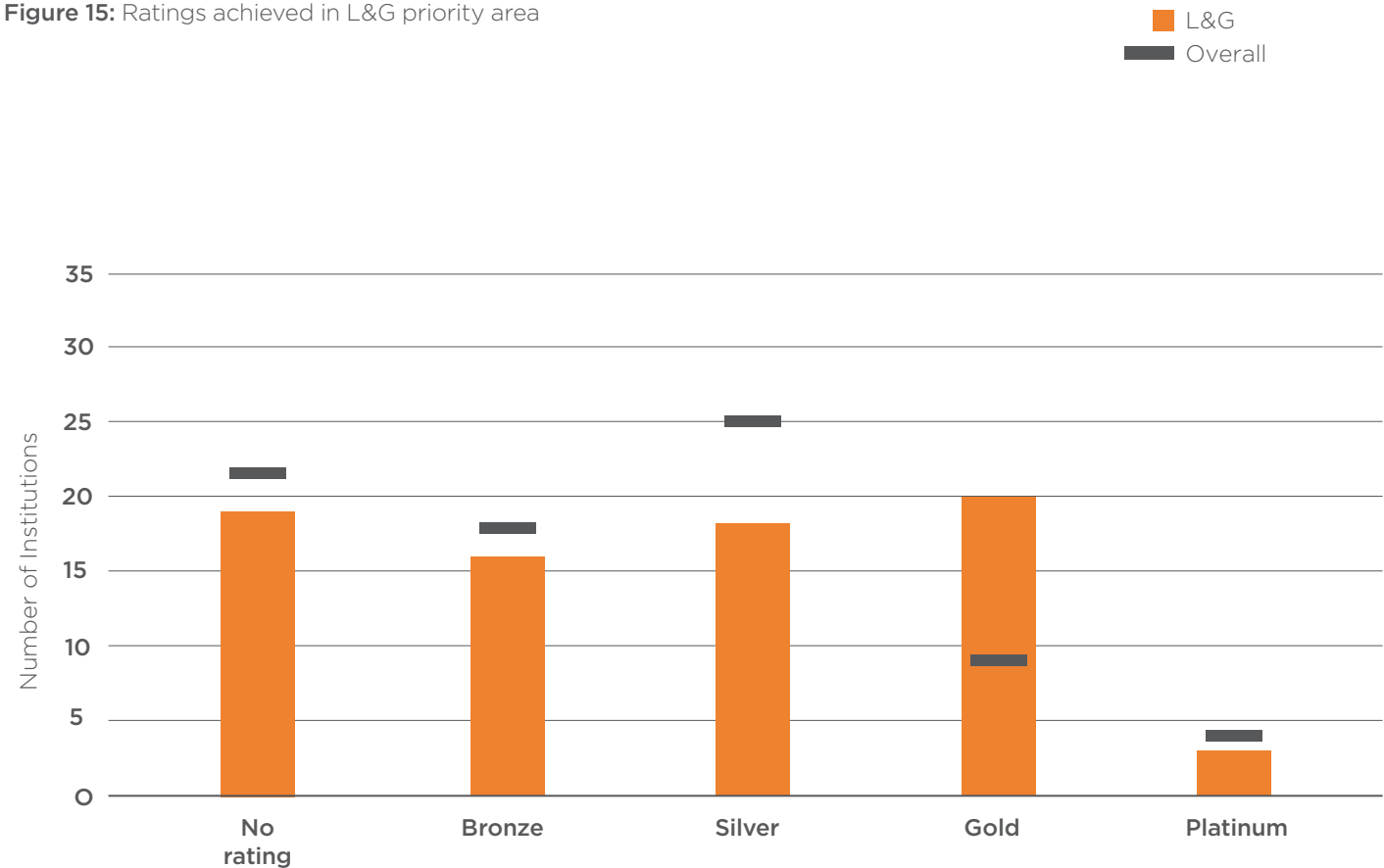
6.2 PARTNERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

OVERALL

The frameworks in this priority area show some significant changes in scores compared to others. Largely, this manifests itself in some of the variations seen last year being equalled out (for example the gap between Procurement & Supplier Engagement and Business & Industry Interface is much reduced).

The Business & Industry Interface framework has seen the greatest increase in score across any of the 18 frameworks in the tool with a similarly large increase in target level.

Conversely, whilst the score for Procurement & Supplier Engagement has reduced, the target level remains the same, indicating an aspiration to continue to improve despite current performance levels.

Partnership and Engagement

Community & Public Engagement | Business & Industry Interface | Procurement & Supplier Engagement | Food & Drink

Figure 16: Frameworks within Partnership & Engagement

Legend: 2019 Target | 2019 Score | 2020 Target | 2020 Score

The average score across the priority area is a little below the average, with the average rating being Bronze. This represents a small improvement since last year.

However, the similarity between the average scores for this priority area and the whole scorecard masks a significantly different distribution of performance. Figure 17 shows that there is a more binary split between institutions who are not achieving a rating and those achieving well.

This may be an effect of the fact that some of the frameworks within this priority area were among the less often completed. That said, whether the number of institutions achieving the lowest rating is an accurate reflection of performance or as a result of a lack of engagement in the issues, it is clear that improvements are possible (and that there exists some exemplar institutions that can lead the way).

Partnership and Engagement

Community & Public Engagement | Business & Industry Interface | Procurement & Supplier Engagement | Food & Drink

Figure 17: Ratings achieved in P&E priority area

■ P&E
▬ Overall
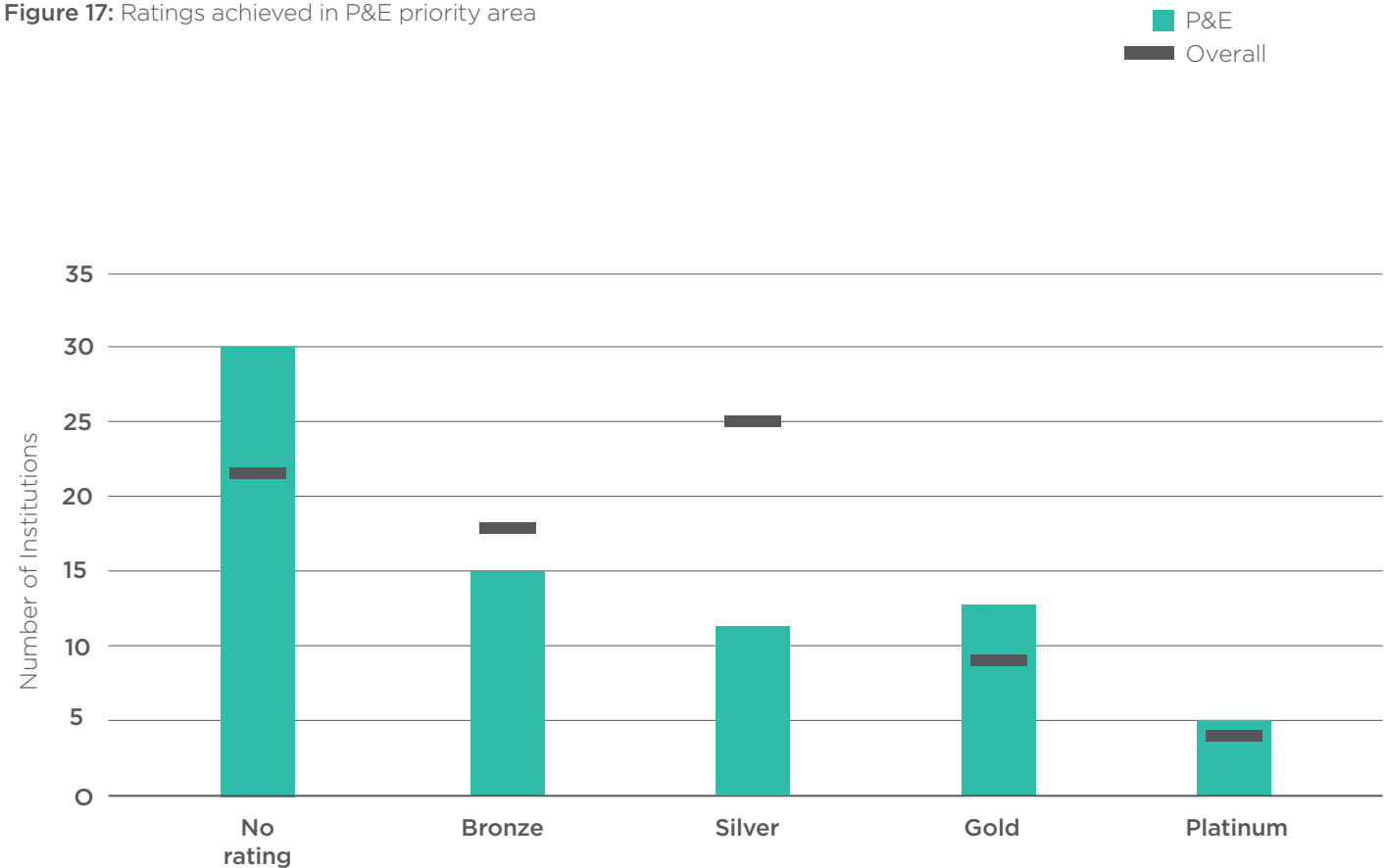
6.3 LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH

OVERALL

Last year, the Research framework had the greatest degree of aspiration (i.e. the difference between score and target). This appears to have been acted on, as this framework has seen the highest increase in score of all priority areas.

There is a slight increase in the proportion of participating institutions which are research-focussed this year but this is marginal in comparison with the significant change seen in this framework.
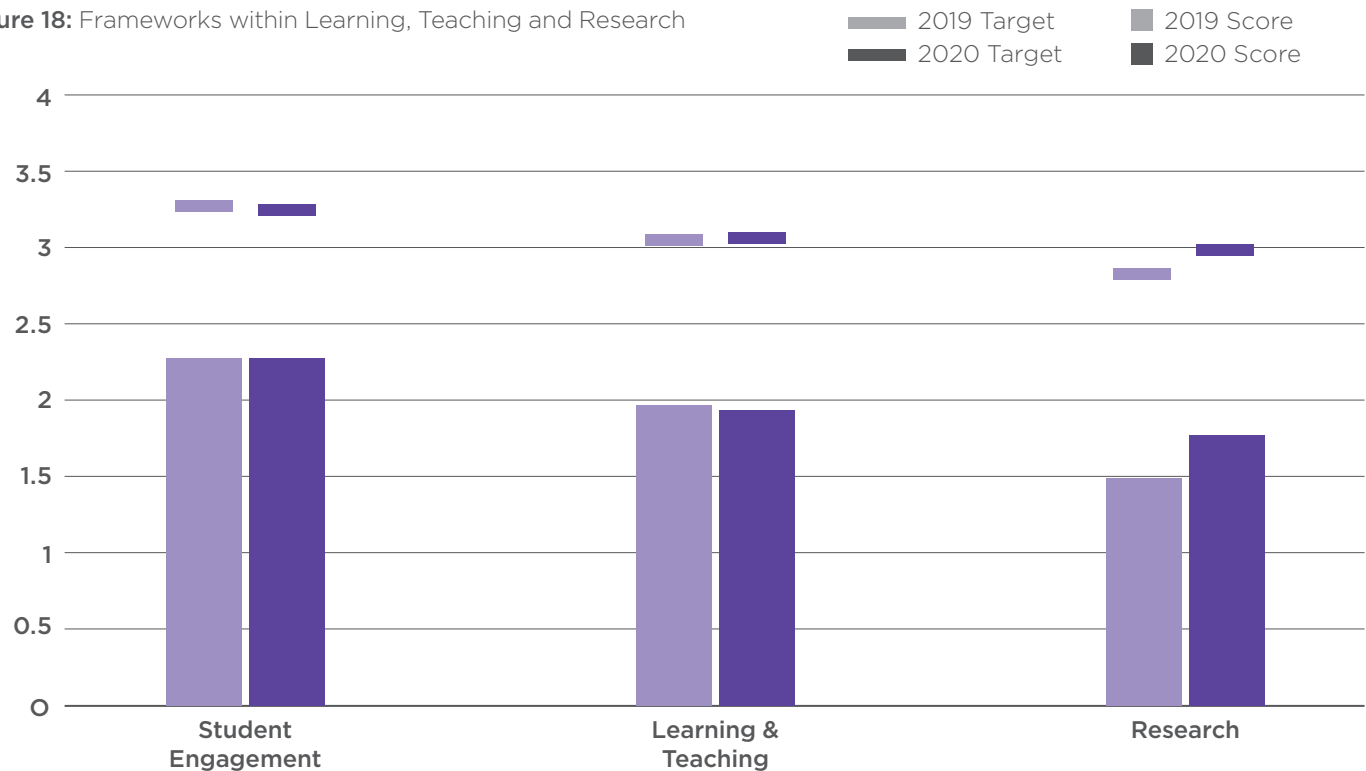
Conversely, the other frameworks in this priority area have seen almost no movement at all.

Learning, Teaching & Research

Learning & Teaching | Research | Student Engagement

Figure 18: Frameworks within Learning, Teaching and Research

Legend: 2019 Target | 2019 Score | 2020 Target | 2020 Score

The Learning, Teaching and Research priority area is the lowest scoring across the four which is reflected in the distribution of institutions across the ratings (Figure 19).

However, there are still institutions performing at levels that achieve the highest ratings of Gold and Platinum, showing that significant progress is possible and the number of institutions achieving Platinum has doubled (from two to four), increasing potential case studies.

Learning, Teaching & Research

Learning & Teaching | Research | Student Engagement

Figure 19: Ratings achieved in LTR priority area

LTR
Overall
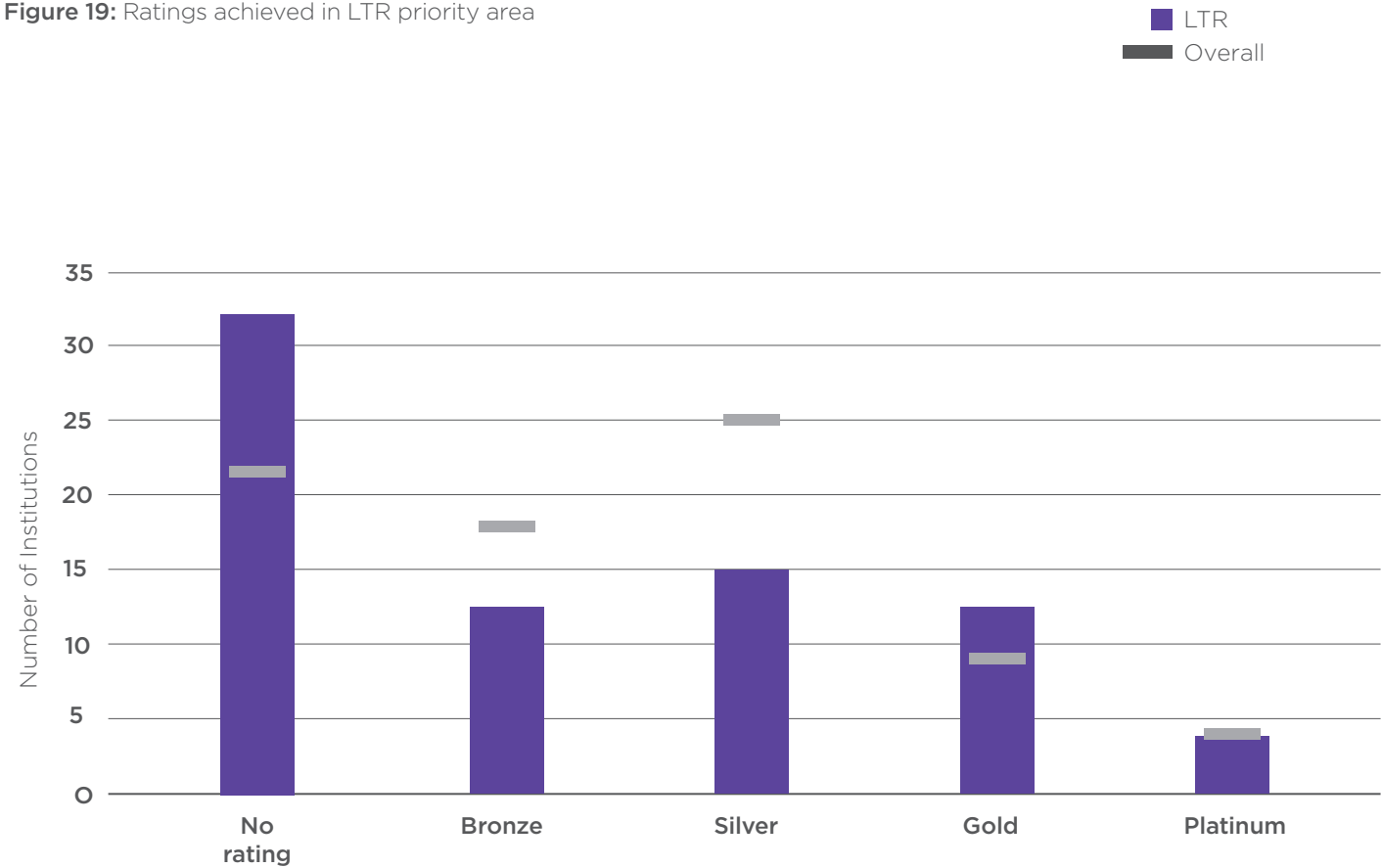
6.4 ESTATES AND OPERATIONS

OVERALL

The Estates and Operations priority area has seen the greatest average increase in aspiration across each of the priority areas, perhaps reflecting its position as one of the most directly controllable elements of sustainability within institutions.

In the case of Travel & Transport, however, this increase in aspiration is as a result of a reduction in score (the greatest reduction in score across all frameworks). The reason for this significant change in performance is not clear.

More positively, though, the Construction & Renovation framework has seen a significant increase in aspiration in addition to an increased score, leading to it having the greatest change in target of all frameworks. Perhaps this is an indication of the fact that many declarations of climate crisis and setting of zero carbon targets over recent years are now filtering down to real tangible actions for an institution's estate.

Climate change adaptation continues to be the framework that performance is significantly below all others. The range of scores seen across the other 17 frameworks is just 0.7 points. Adaptation scores 0.5 points below this range, making it a clear outlier (Figure 20).

Estates & Operations

Waste | Biodiversity | Construction | Water | Travel | Adaptation | Energy

Figure 20: Frameworks within Estates and Operations

Legend: 2019 Target | 2020 Target | 2019 Score | 2020 Score
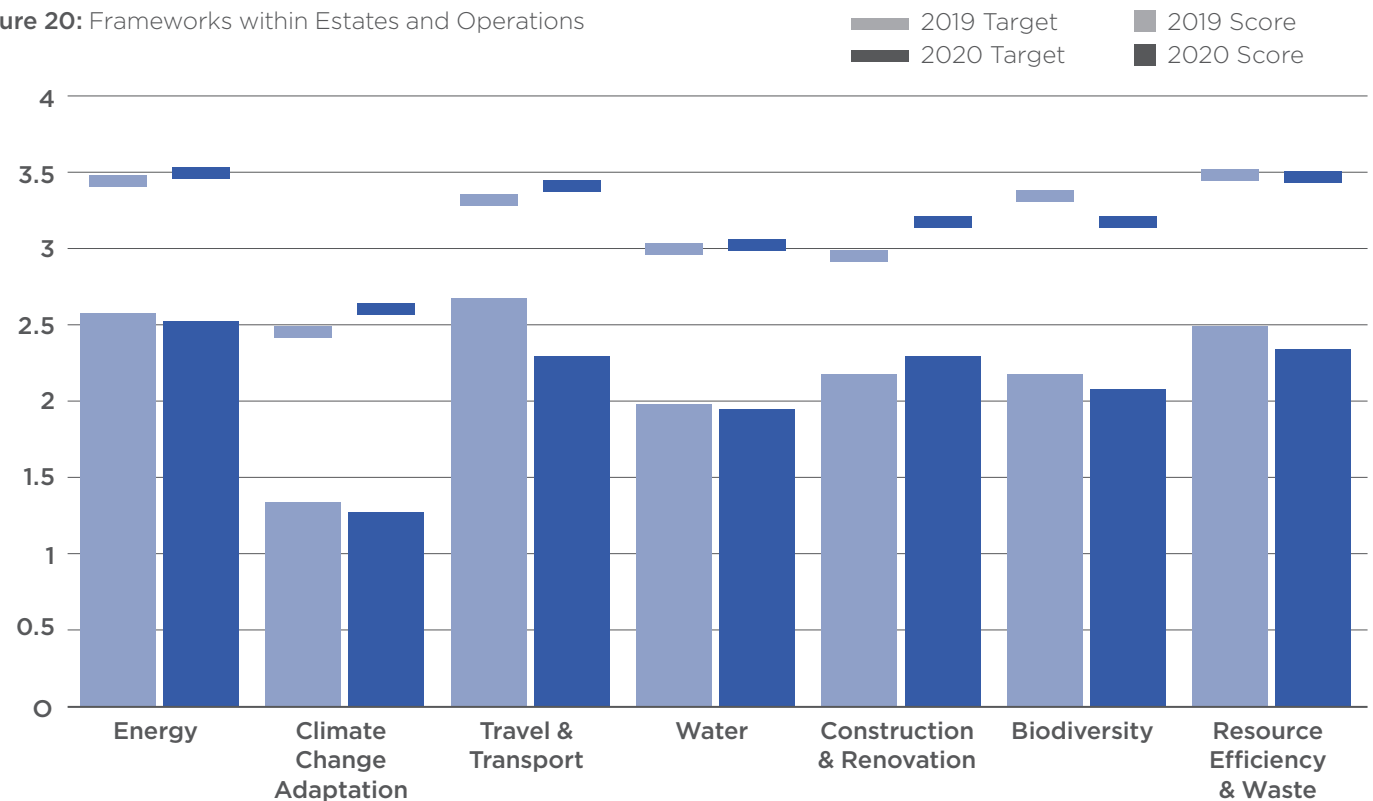
This low performance has consistently been the case since the first year of the Green Scorecard and the sector seems to be making very little progress. Indeed, the score has reduced slightly. As previously mentioned, this framework is one which also has particularly low engagement.

On the one hand, it is baffling that the sector continues to ignore an issue that could have such a significant impact on its future business continuity. However, it is also not surprising. Climate Change Adaptation has always been seen as a problem for the future when compared to mitigation and carbon reductions which have, at least recently, been seen with a sense of urgency.

Estates & Operations

Waste | Biodiversity | Construction | Water | Travel | Adaptation | Energy

Figure 21: Adaptation as an outlier
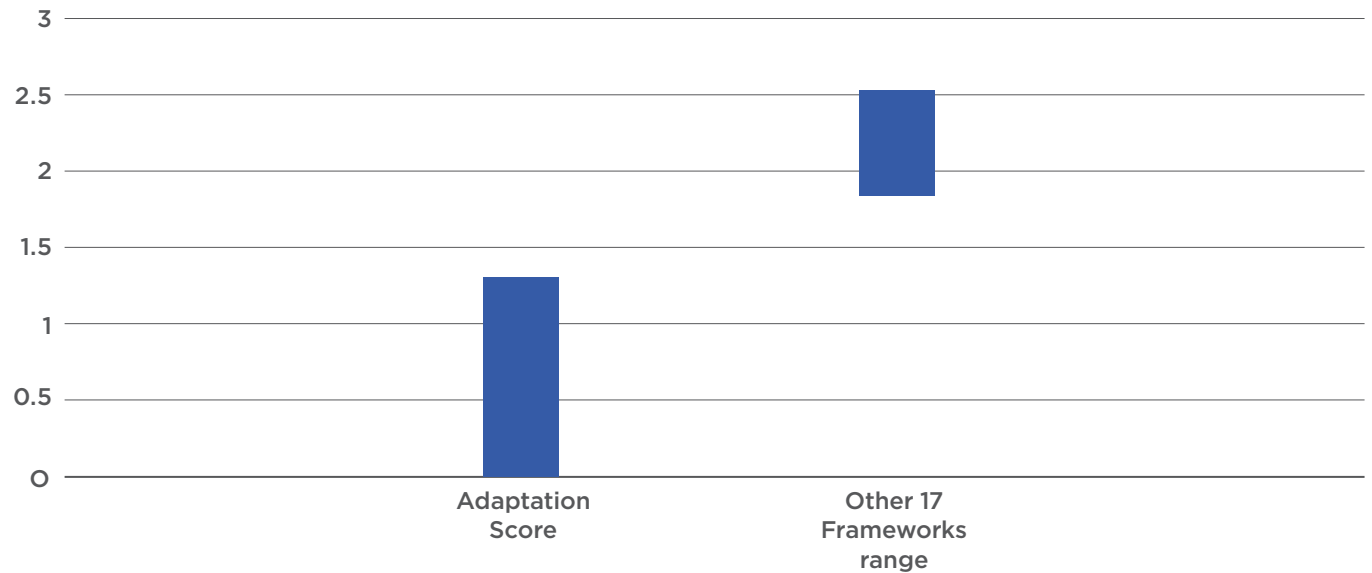
The Estates and Operation priority area scored very close to the average which is reflected by the similar distribution of ratings (Figure 22).

This is a similar distribution to that seen last year with the exception that four institutions are now very encouragingly achieving a Platinum rating where none reached this level last year. This shows that the highest level of achievement is possible. Given that the Estates and Operations priority area relates to some very practical and tangible aspects of sustainability that are very directly measurable, this improvement in the number of exemplars is an excellent development.

Estates & Operations

Waste | Biodiversity | Construction | Water | Travel | Adaptation | Energy

Figure 22: Ratings achieved in E&O priority area
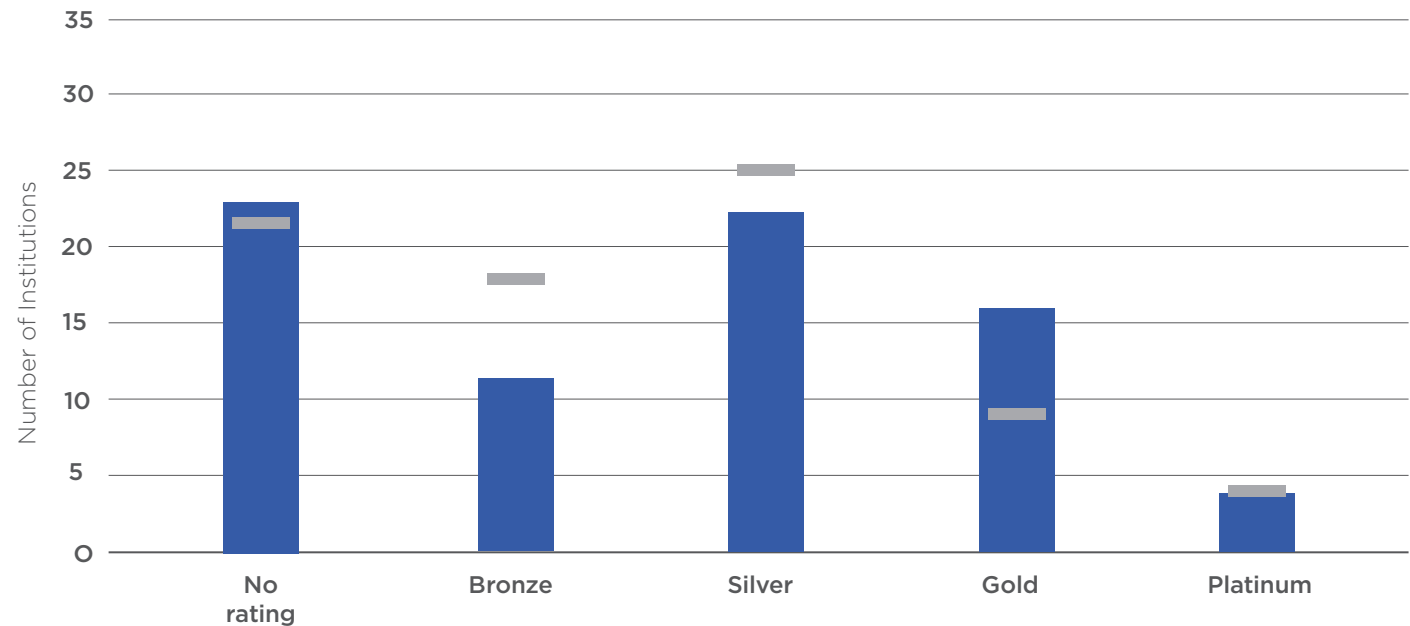
7 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The SLS offers institutions the ability to link frameworks to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[3] and to use these linkages to appraise their contribution to the Goals based on their score within the linked frameworks. These potential and actual impacts are given one of five descriptions of impact: none; limited; medium; high; significant.

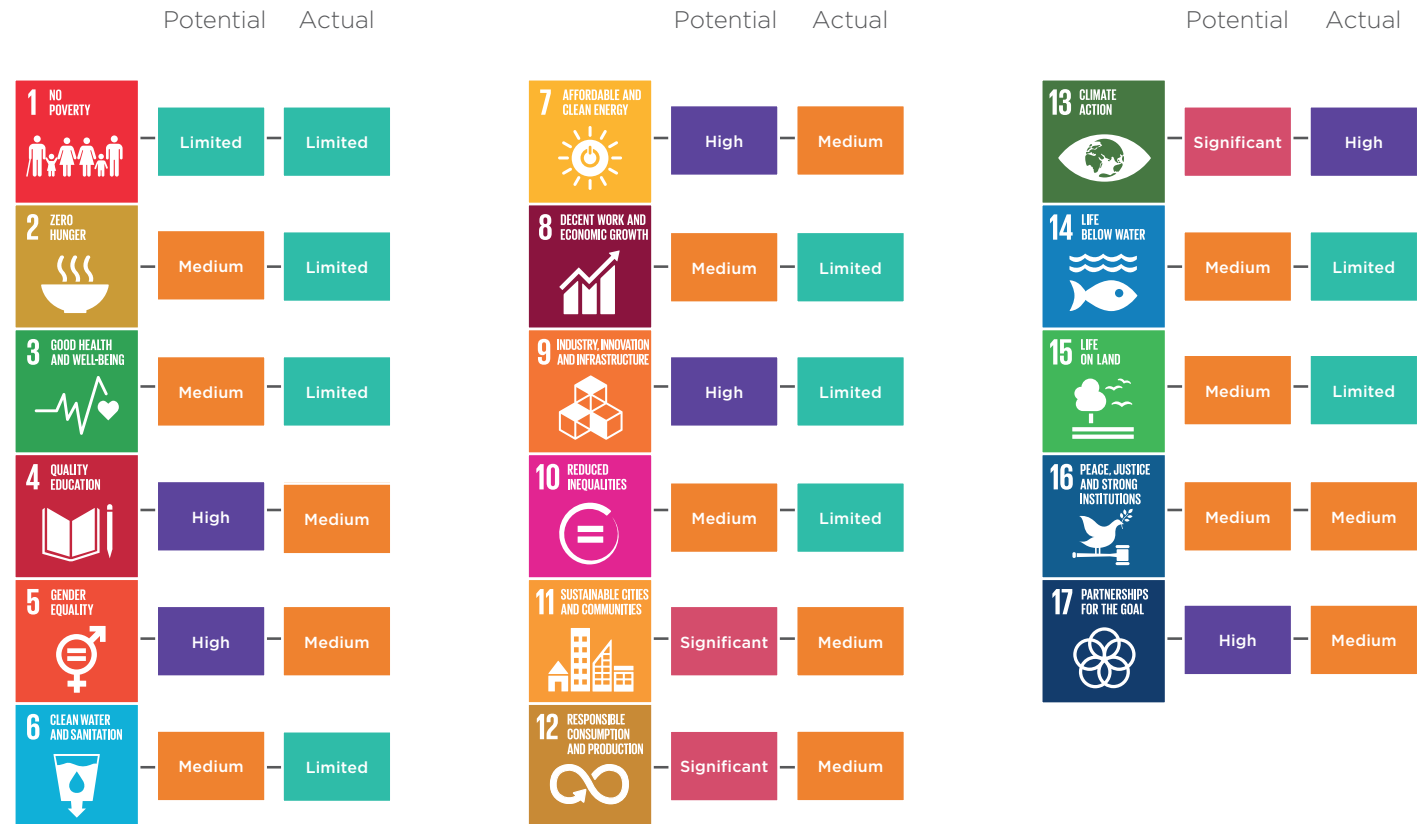The tool gives institutions the option to adapt the linkages between the frameworks and the Goals to match their own internal mappings. It is recognised that the wide variety in institutions' activities might lead to differences in relevance of the Goals. However, when looking at the potential impacts we see that most institutions are using the default connections.

There has been little high-level movement in the overall impacts (right). This is likely because the bands are quite wide and the subtle changes in scores described in the rest of this report are not enough to create differences at this scale.

IMPACTS

SDG	Potential	Actual
1 NO POVERTY	Limited	Limited
2 ZERO HUNGER	Medium	Limited
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	Medium	Limited
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	High	Medium
5 GENDER EQUALITY	High	Medium
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	Medium	Limited

SDG	Potential	Actual
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	High	Medium
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	Medium	Limited
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	High	Limited
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	Medium	Limited
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	Significant	Medium
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	Significant	Medium

SDG	Potential	Actual
13 CLIMATE ACTION	Significant	High
14 LIFE BELOW WATER	Medium	Limited
15 LIFE ON LAND	Medium	Limited
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	Medium	Medium
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOAL	High	Medium

3 https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

The magnitude of this shift is that around 10 more institutions are entering scores that indicate they are having a higher impact on frameworks linked to gender equality than last year. In the context of the total number participating in the tool (76), this is a significant achievement that should be celebrated.

Figure 23: Distribution of ratings related to SDG5 (Gender Equality)

	2019	2020
Significant	0%	0%
High	4%	16%
Medium	62%	49%
Limited	24%	29%
None	7%	9%
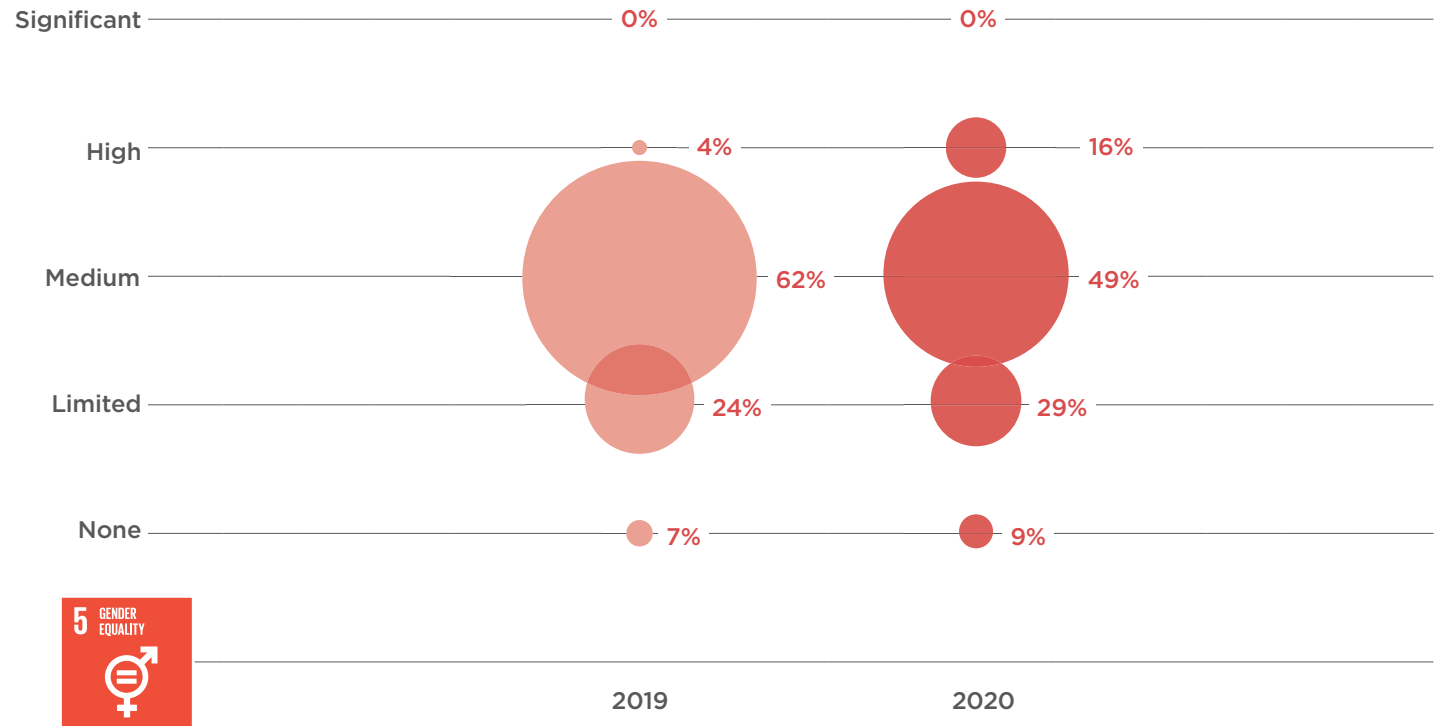
8 SUMMARY

The findings of this report are encouraging in some aspects, but it also highlights where the sector is still struggling to make progress.

It is vital that institutions take a whole-institution approach and the engagement in the SLS shows that this approach works whilst allowing institutions to increase frameworks as they develop their plans. It is fantastic to see the improvements made from returning participants which illustrates that the tool creates real change and tangible actions for institutions. With 4 institutions now achieving Platinum the bar has been raised, but with the majority of institutions at Bronze/Silver, we recognise that this is a journey and we support them in this.

Leadership and Governance remains the highest Priority Area and again this is even stronger in colleges. This illustrates that big budgets are not nescessarily required for institutions to show real leadership and action.

An area for concern for the sector is that Risk and Adaptation are still low – with climate changes being felt already, the sector really has to step up their actions in these areas.

With Estates and Operations remaining strong this could be a result of institutions focusing on net-zero actions. This is also shown as Goal 13 – Climate Action – is the only SDG that shows the sector having a High Impact.

Yet, the core business of an institution is in it's teaching, learning and research. Sector performance shows that curriculum still needs a lot of attention. With increasing demands from learners to be taught more relevant skills and knowledge to help equip them to be ready for the challenges and opportunities they will face. Whilst institutions make the race to net-zero, they must not forget their core purpose and civic duties.

Whilst the data for this report was collated prior to the pandemic, we must acknowledge the disruption that has faced the sector. Yet, the climate crisis continues and we must ensure that the sector uses the learning from the pandemic to focus on a green recovery and emerge stronger to reduce and negate climate change. Both EAUC and AUDE are here to continue to support the sector in this.

Iain Patton   **Stephen Wells,**
CEO, EAUC   Chair, AUDE

9 PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

RETURNING PARTICIPANTS

Anglia Ruskin University

Aston University

Bath Spa University

Birmingham City University

Bournemouth University

Bridgend College

Buckinghamshire New University

Canterbury Christ Church University

Cardiff University

Coventry University

De Montfort University

King's College London

Kingston University

Leeds Beckett University

Loughborough University

Oxford Brookes University

Sheffield Hallam University

Shipley College

South Devon College

The Nottingham Trent University

The Queen's University of Belfast

The Royal Veterinary College

The University of Central Lancashire

The University of Dundee

The University of Kent

The University of Leicester

The University of Lincoln

The University of Liverpool

The University of Manchester

The University of Salford

The University of Sheffield

The University of St Andrews

The University of Stirling

The University of Strathclyde

The University of Surrey

The University of Warwick

The University of Westminster

The University of York

University College Cork

University of Chester

University of Derby

University of Northumbria at Newcastle

University of Ulster

University of Worcester

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you'd like further information on the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard, please contact us on info@sustainabilityleadershipscorecard.org.uk

9 PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

NEW PARTICIPANTS

Aberystwyth University

Academy of Medical Royal Colleges

Charles Sturt University (Australia)

De La Salle University (Philippines)

Edge Hill University

Heriot-Watt University

London Metropolitan University

London South Bank University

North East Scotland College

Queen Mary University of London

Teesside University

The City University

The London Institute of Banking & Finance

The University of Bath

The University of Bolton

The University of Bradford

The University of Edinburgh

The University of Exeter

The University of Huddersfield

The University of Lancaster

The University of Northampton

The University of Oxford

The University of Portsmouth

The University of Reading

The University of Winchester

University College London

University College of Estate Management (UCEM)

University of Durham

University of Nottingham

University of Plymouth

Wakefield College

West Lothian College

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