

Sustainability Reporting – Unlocking the Potential of STARS Reporting in German Higher Education Sector



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About AASHE

- An international association of **colleges & universities** working to create a sustainable future.
- About 800 members, including HEIs, businesses, and NGOs.

Key Activities:

- Annual conference
- Virtual education
- Mentorship program
- Resource center
- AASHE Bulletin
- Online community
- Awards
- STARS

STARS Overview



STARS is a transparent, self-reporting framework used by hundreds of colleges and universities to measure and communicate their sustainability performance.



Topical Scope

AC

Curriculum
Research

EN

Campus Engagement
Public Engagement

OP

Buildings &
Grounds
Energy & Climate
Food & Dining
Procurement &
Waste
Transportation

PA

Coordination &
Planning
Investment
Social Equity
Wellbeing & Work

Relationship to the field

Similar to ranking systems	Similar to assessment or reporting frameworks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Large, increasingly global user base● Online reporting platform● Aggregate scoring● Public recognition for participants● Staff support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Full transparency around methodology● Option to publish an unscored report● Flexible reporting timelines

Distinguishing Features

- Participatory and transparent governance processes
- Breath of topical scope
- Rating system
- Detailed methodology
- Context-based scoring
- Points for innovation
- Transparent data
- Mechanisms to ensure data quality
- Free and paid participation options

Endorsements

“The study has identified 18 popular SHE assessment approaches out of which Sustainability Tracking and Assessment Rating System (STARS) and Campus Sustainability Assessment Framework (CSAF) were found out to have more strength in comparison of other SHE assessment approaches.”

Saadatian et al., 2011: Identifying Strength and Weakness of Sustainable Higher Educational Assessment Approaches

Endorsements (cont.)

“The findings showed that the STARS were by far the most comprehensive assessment framework for university sustainability.”

Shi & Lai, 2013: An alternative university sustainability rating framework with a structured criteria tree

Endorsements (cont.)

“STARS is one of the most comprehensive and advantageous assessment tools. The paper makes its conclusion by arguing that STARS meets the most important attributes of an ideal assessment tool suggested by Shriberg (2002). These attributes are: identifying important issues; emphasising comprehensibility; and easiness of comparability and calculability.”

[Alghamdi et al., 2017: Assessment tools' indicators for sustainability in universities: an analytical overview](#)

Endorsements (cont.)

“The comparison found in this research is a first step in showing that STARS may be the most suitable basis for a uniform rating of sustainability in higher education institutions. Based on criteria set forth in previous research as well as empirical survey results, it is clear that STARS is a methodology that could be used as the cornerstone for a universal rating system.”

Maragakis & Dobbelsteen, 2015: Sustainability in Higher Education: Analysis and Selection of Assessment Systems

Endorsements (cont.)

“STARS would appear to be the most effective benchmarking tool for assessing and tracking sustainability for higher educational institutions that want to assess and track sustainability across the breadth of campus life in education, research, operations, governance, and community engagement.”

Kamal & Asmuss, 2013: Benchmarking tools for assessing and tracking sustainability in higher educational institutions: Identifying an effective tool for the University of Saskatchewan