UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STAFF COLLEGE

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ONLINE

02 SEP 2025 - 04 SEP 2025

UN Summer Academy

Human rights and governance
Stakeholder engagement and partnerships
Sustainable development and the SDGsUN 2.0Innovation



LANGUAGE	DURATION	ENROLL BY	PRICE	LOCATION	TARGET
English	3 days	22 Aug 2025	800 USD	ONLINE	Everyone

CONTACT sustainable-development@unssc.org

The UN Summer Academy (UNSA) fosters rich interactions on issues relevant to the work of the United Nations and its partners in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. The theme for this year is **'Digital Transformation for Sustainable Development'**.

We are pleased to offer a limited number of **full scholarships** funded by the state government of **North Rhine-Westphalia**. The criteria and the application process are described at the end of this page.

Introduction

The UN Summer Academy is a dynamic and engaging global forum for advancing sustainable development. For over a decade, the academy has convened exceptional groups of changemakers annually to address global challenges that the UN system and its partners from multiple sectors and regions across the world are addressing. The academy combines academic rigour with cutting-edge thinking, providing participants with innovative learning and networking opportunities.

In September 2025, the academy will once again welcome participants to engage in robust discussions and knowledge exchanges on **Digital Transformation for Sustainable Development**.

Objectives

Upon successfully participating in the UN Summer Academy 2025, participants will:

- Demonstrate a strong understanding of how digital transformation can be an enabler for sustainable development;
- Be able to critically examine governance and ethical considerations in the realm of data-sharing ecosystems and artificial intelligence; and
- Cultivate awareness of the cultural shifts needed to foster collaboration and build trust to unlock the full potential of digital transformation as a driver of sustainable development.

Course methodology

This 5th virtual edition of academy is designed using experiential online learning methodologies that combine panel discussions featuring high-level speakers with interactive opportunities for knowledge exchange, experience sharing, and hands-on practice sessions.

Most of the virtual academy is synchronous with limited mandatory pre-readings. Participants will engage with a wide range of expert inputs during live webinars, reflect in small-groups during breakout activities, prepare for learner-led and peer-to-peer knowledge exchanges, and apply the knowledge and skills they have during co-creation activities.

This academy places a premium on fun and relationship-building. During networking sessions, participants showcase their work, play games, and engage in other social activities.

Course contents

In this year's summer academy, participants will explore key topics in-depth through plenary sessions, applied use cases, hands-on practice sessions, and side events on trending topics. Participants will have an opportunity to present their solution to a real-world sustainable development challenge by participating in a **hackathon**.

An agenda detailing the session themes is presented below.

UNITED NATIONS SUMMER ACADEMY 2025

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STAFF COLLEGE | UN SUMMER ACADEMY

Agenda

02ND SEPTEMBER Tuesday

10:00 - 11:30 Opening and Fire Side Chat

Speakers:
- State Secretary Christian Wiermer, Government of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW)
- Doreen Bogdan-Martin, ITU Secretary-General
- Silke Weinlich, UNSSC Deputy Director
- Christianna Pangalos, Learning Portfolio Manager, UNSSC
- David Jensen, Regional Coordinator, UNEP Digital Transformation Programme
- Samant Veer Kakkar, Learning Portfolio Manager, UNSSC

11:30 - 11:45 COFFEE BREAK

11:45 - 12:45 Program Overview

Speakers: UNSA Team

12:45 - 13:25 LUNCH

13:25 - 14:05 TREND TALK

14:05 - 14:15 COFFEE BREAK

14:15 - 15:30 Plenary 1 : Creating an enabling environment to unlock the potential of Digital Transformation for Sustainable Development

Speakers:
- Catherine Mulligan, Founder, Digital Crossroads
- Crystal Rugege, Managing Director, Rwanda Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

15:30 - 16:30 Key Takeaways + Working Group Preparatory Session

03RD SEPTEMBER Wednesday

10:00 - 11:30 Plenary 2: Incentives for data sharing for better Sustainable Development outcomes

Speakers:
- Aditya Aggarwal, Founder, D4D Insights
- Irene Mwoga, Digital Transformation Sub Program Coordinator - Regional Officer for Africa, UNEP

11:30 - 11:45 COFFEE BREAK

11:45 - 12:45 Working Group Session: Systems Thinking

Speaker:
Beatriz Gonzalez Mendoza, Associate Learning Officer, UNSSC

12:45 - 13:25 LUNCH

13:25 - 14:05 SKILLS CLINIC

14:05 - 14:15 COFFEE BREAK

14:15 - 15:30 Plenary 3 : Addressing Key Considerations of AI for Sustainable Development: Ethics, Biases, and Environmental Cost

Speakers:
- Bethany Edmunds, Assistant Dean of Computing Programs for Vancouver & Seattle and Teaching Professor at Northeastern University
- Jayant Narayan, AI Expert UNDP Chief Digital Office

15:30 - 16:30 Key Takeaways + Hackathon Preparatory Session

04TH SEPTEMBER Thursday

10:00 - 11:30 Plenary 4 : Cultivating a Digital-First Mindset for Sustainable Development

Speakers:
- Shivam Kishore, DT Senior Advisor
- Rika Nakazawa, Chief Commercial Innovation, NTT

11:30 - 11:45 COFFEE BREAK

11:45 - 12:45 Hackathon: Digital Culture in Practice

Speaker:
Lourdes Rodrigues, Senior Foresight Consultant

12:45 - 13:25 LUNCH

13:25 - 14:05 SHARE FAIR

14:05 - 14:15 COFFEE BREAK

14:15 - 15:30 Hackathon De-brief and Team Presentations

Panel:
- Dominic Orr, Team Lead, Data Policy, GIZ
- Agnes Cserhati, Coach, Trainer, Author & Speaker, CEO, AC PowerCoaching
- Dhani Spiller, Head, UNDP Digital Capacity Lab

15:30 - 16:30 Closing Ceremony

Side Events







13:25 - 14:05	**Trend Talk:** AI Skills Coalition **Speaker:** Silvia Vacchi, Training Development Officer, ITU	**Skills Clinic:** Mapping Data Sources **Speaker:** Christophe Ji, Data Policy Analyst, UNDP	**Share Fair:** Group A **Speakers:** UNSA Participants
13:25 - 14:05	**Trend Talk:** User-centred Design and Lean Start-ups **Speakers:** Hila Cohen, Deputy Head of Innovation Accelerator, WFP; Emmale Knape, Head of IGNITE Innovation Hub, WFP	**Skills Clinic:** #DigitalCheckNRW **Speaker:** Asbirg Naranjo, Co-project Manager, #DigitalCheckNRW	**Share Fair:** Group B **Speakers:** UNSA Participants

Target audience

Up to 100 applicants who sign up will be selected based on their professional/academic profile and motivation statements, with **scholarships available for a select few.** When signing up, make sure you dedicate enough time to fill in all the required information, especially at the question: "**Tell us a bit more about why you are applying for this course**".

The cohort will comprise of UN professionals; representatives from national and local government bodies; members of civil society, academia; and sustainability intrapreneurs from the private sector. More specifically, successful applicants to UNSA will be mid-level professionals with 8-15 years of experience working on digital transformation for sustainable development.

The selection board will make sure geographic regions, gender, and sectors – including UN and non-UN - are well represented in the cohort.

IMPORTANT

- **Attendance requirements**: Participants **must commit to attending all three days** of the Academy. **Certificates** from the United Nations System Staff College will be awarded to participants who meet the attendance rate criteria for the UN Summer Academy.
- **Technical requirements:** Participants will need to access the academy through a desktop PC or laptop with an internet connection, as well as a functioning webcam, microphone, and speakers. Internet speed and volume should be sufficient for four to five hours of video-conferencing each day. Due to the interactive and co-creative format of the Academy, **it is not possible to participate using a smartphone**.

Cost of participation

The course fee of USD 800 for individual participants covers the following:

- **Three days of online training**, including a technical orientation session on how to navigate the virtual platform and use the collaborative tools for the course.
- **Exclusive access to the UNSSC online social learning environment** with asynchronous learning activities, background materials, and the opportunity to connect with and learn from peers.
- **All course materials**, references, and contacts.

Participants are expected to cover all costs related to their participation in UNSA (computer, Internet access, any other IT equipment, etc.) .

Scholarships

How to apply for a UNSA 2025 Scholarship?

Please read the instructions carefully before you begin.

- **Step 1**: Please first register for the UN Summer Academy by clicking on the **"Sign up" button at the top of this page**. Once your course registration is complete, and pending approval, you should receive an automatically generated email. **Your scholarship application will not be taken into consideration if you have not registered on this page first.**
- **Step 2**: After you have completed your registration on this page, please apply via this Scholarship Application Form using the **same email address**.

IMPORTANT

1. **There are a limited number of scholarships available, and the application process is highly competitive.** We encourage you to finance your participation through other means if possible.
2. We will get in touch with shortlisted candidates via the email address provided in the application. Kindly refrain from sending follow-up emails regarding application status.

The deadline for scholarship applications is Friday, 1 August 2025.