



**The University of the West of England,
Bristol**

Presentation by

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Using quality assurance processes to embed sustainability in the curriculum at UWE Bristol

*Symposium: Implementing
Sustainability in the Curriculum of
Universities*

Manchester Metropolitan University

Structure of Presentation

- UWE Bristol
- Policy Hierarchy
- ESD Aim
- Quality Management Approach
- Baseline and Benchmarks
- ESD in the Quality Management and Enhancement Framework
- Curriculum Design, Development, Approval and Review
- Reflections
- Summary and Concluding Comments



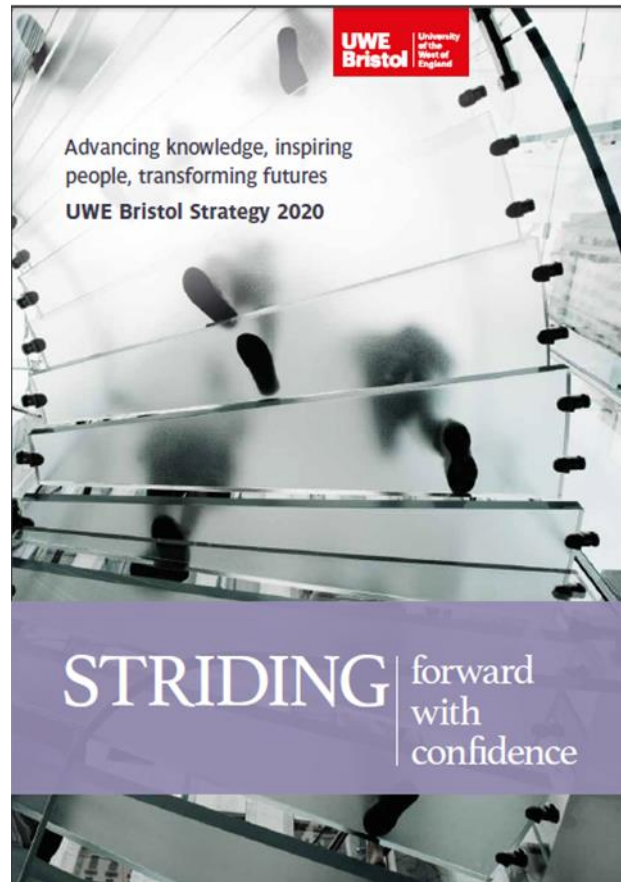
UWE Bristol

- UWE - 27,000 students, 3,300 staff, annual budget of £240 million
- Students come to UWE from all parts of the UK and from over 140 countries worldwide.
- UWE is a multi-site university with three campuses in and around Bristol encompassing fourteen academic departments.
- UWE offers more than 600 courses, at undergraduate, postgraduate, professional and short course level across the arts, creative industries, health, science, business, law, environment and technology disciplines.



The UWE Policy Hierarchy

- Strategy 2020 sets the governance and policy authority for sustainability at UWE



The UWE Policy Hierarchy

- The Sustainability Plan sets out how UWE will implement its curricula ambitions for ESD.
- An ESD Action Plan provides a more detailed exposition of the aims and objectives laid out in the Sustainability Plan.
- The Action Plan is developed, owned and implemented by the Knowledge Exchange for Sustainability Education (KESE) Group.
- Accountability for the Action Plan rests with the Sustainability Board and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.
- An annual Sustainability Report is produced detailing the university's progress in meeting its aims and objectives.
- A range of instruments manages implementation and audits outcomes. These include:
 - the Quality Management and Enhancement Framework (QMEF),
 - ISO14001 certification,
 - Responsible Futures accreditation,
 - PRME.

UWE's ESD Aim

- UWE, Bristol is committed to ensuring that all its students, irrespective of their programme of study, are introduced to the ideas of sustainable development during their degree programme.
- We seek to prepare our future graduates for the sustainable development challenges of the 21st century integrating sustainability into curricula, research, campus operations and our interactions with our local communities.



ESD in the Sustainability Plan

ESD in the Sustainability Plan is identified in the following ways:

- 'The University will enable all students to explore sustainable development in the context of their discipline'
- 'All Departments... will ensure ESD is embedded at the programme level'
- 'University will ensure that its staff are trained and developed in their understanding of the underpinning concepts'
- Locates ESD within the context of the discipline of study.
- Recognises that all disciplines must engage.
- Recognises that the extent of engagement can differ.



Education for Sustainable Development

Sustainability

- › Governance, strategy, finance
- › Policies, plans and targets
- › Sustainability services
- › Awards
- › Get Involved in sustainability
- › Sustainability contacts
- › Sustainability films
- › Education
 - 1 About ESD at UWE Bristol
 - 1 Strategy and leadership
 - 1 Our approach
 - 1 Implementation and action
 - 1 Supporting staff and students
 - 1 Tracking progress
 - 1 Connecting with others
- › Research and partnerships
- › News and events

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) sits at the heart of UWE Bristol's institutional strategy and teaching and learning framework.

About ESD at UWE Bristol

A holistic approach offering opportunities for all students.

Strategy, leadership and responsibility

Ensuring that students are equipped with skills and learning for the 21st century.

Our approach

We take a holistic approach to education for sustainable development.

Implementation and action

Building sustainability into programmes of study, placements and volunteering.

Supporting staff and students

Find out more about our staff network for sustainability education and access key resources.

Tracking progress

Building sustainability into programmes of study, placements and volunteering.

Connecting with others

Find out more about our staff network for sustainability education and access key resources.

Related videos

- Green Gown 2015 finalist film "Raising the Baseline"
- Green Gown 2015 finalist film "Green Capital Student Capital"
- Leading Sustainability: UWE Bristol's journey
- Influence, Implement, Engage: Triple imperative for ESD in HE

Baselines and Benchmarks

Information sources

- Baseline curriculum survey undertaken in 2008.
 - Annual analysis of programme and module specifications
 - Annual survey of HoDs and Associate Deans from 2011 onwards
 - Student feedback
 - Curriculum Review Panels
 - Curriculum Development Panels
 - Annual Programme and Department reports
-
- This information guides the development of curriculum engagement with ESD and informs staff development activities.

Partners in Quality

Actors

- Staff
- Students
- The Students' Union
- Board of Governors

Mechanisms

- Staff Training and Development
- Internal Quality Systems
 - Quality Management and Enhancement Framework
 - Sustainability Board
 - Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee
- External Validation Systems
 - ISO 14001
 - Responsible Futures
 - PRME
 - QAA Quality Code and Higher Education Review

Quality Management at UWE

- Quality management at UWE is used to assure the approval, enhancement, review and monitoring of the University's provision
- in order to develop relevant, sustainable and robust curricula; maintain and enhance the standards of UWE provision, and ensure the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.
- So how can we use this framework to assure ourselves that ESD is present in the curricula in the way our policy statements intend?

Academic Services

- › Governance
- › Quality management
 - › Quality framework
 - Programmes
 - Annual monitoring
 - Periodic curriculum review
 - Professional bodies
 - External Peer Review
 - › External examiner resources
 - › Complaints and appeals
 - › Quality management contacts
- › Academic partnerships
- › Student records and assessment

Quality Management and Enhancement Framework (QMEF)

The Quality Management and Enhancement Framework (QMEF) covers the principles and processes of the following areas:

[Programmes](#)

New programmes, changes to existing programmes, approval of new modules and changes to modules, delivery of existing programme to new partner institution and programme closure.

[Annual monitoring](#)

Annual monitoring of all taught provision.

[Periodic curriculum review](#)

The internal periodic review of the curriculum.

[Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies \(PSRBs\)](#)

Engagement with Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies in relation to accreditation review and approval activity.

[External Peer Review](#)

The management of threshold standards by means of external participation in academic standards.

Related links

- › Curriculum approval and review (SharePoint)
- › Policies
- › Strategy documents
- › Academic regulations

QMEF contacts



Related information

[Education for Sustainable](#)

[Development and QMEF](#)



› [guidance for staff](#)

› [UWE Bristol Graduate Attribute Framework](#)

Coverage of the Quality Management and Enhancement Framework (QMEF)

- New programmes, changes to existing programmes, approval of new modules and changes to modules, delivery of existing programme to new partner institution.
- Annual monitoring of all taught provision.
- The internal periodic review of the curriculum.
- Engagement with Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies in relation to accreditation review and approval activity.



Education for Sustainable Development and the Quality Management and Enhancement Framework

The QMEF references the

- UWE Sustainability Plan,
- the Annual ESD Action Plan,
- the QAA-HEA Guidance and the
- Hefce Sustainable Development Framework

Together these provide the context in which the QMEF is used to evidence ESD content and to enhance its visibility.



ESD in the QMEF

Curriculum Design, Development and Review

- New programmes or modules
- Changes to programmes or modules
- Periodic Curriculum Review

Curriculum Approval

- Curriculum Approval Panels
- Faculty Academic Standards Committee

Annual Reporting

- Module Report
- Programme Report
- Department Report

Guidance for curriculum designers

Guidance for approval panels

Curriculum Design and Development

New Programmes

- The design team for a new programme should consider the place of ESD in the proposed programme
- A rationale should be provided in their documentation to explain how ESD has been considered in the design process.
- Learning outcomes with an ESD context should be highlighted and assessments of ESD attributes made clear.
- Reference should be made to the graduate outcomes identified in the QAA-HEA Guidance.
- Programme designers should consider the role that can be played by the formal and informal curricula in delivering ESD within a new programme.

Curriculum Design and Development

- There is no expectation that all modules within a programme will consider ESD.
- However, in order to meet the expectation that each programme will consider ESD one or more modules at each level of study *must* consider ESD in its syllabus.

Programme Change

- Where a programme team proposes a change to the specification then the programme team should consider the opportunity to enhance the visibility and place of ESD within the changed curriculum.
- A rationale should be provided to explain how ESD has been considered in the design process.
- Learning outcomes with an ESD context should be highlighted and assessments of ESD attributes made clear.
- Reference may be made to the graduate outcomes identified in the QAA Guidance.
- Programme designers should note the guidance for new curriculum developers and include relevant responses within the rationale for the proposed programme change.

New Modules and Changes to a Module

- Within either the development of a module or the process of module change a module team should consider the opportunity to enhance the visibility and place of ESD within the changed curriculum.
- Learning outcomes with an ESD context should be highlighted and assessments of ESD attributes made clear.
- Module designers should consider the contribution to ESD that will arise from group work, projects, field visits, external speakers, work placements, PAL activities and extra curricula activities.

Curriculum Approval Processes

Academic Standards and Quality Committees and **Curriculum Approval Panels** should

- Confirm that the design team has reflected upon the opportunity to position ESD considerations within its specification.
- A rationale should be provided to explain how ESD has been considered in the design process.
- Minutes of meetings should note that this has been considered in the provision.
- Examples of enhancement or good practice such as learning outcomes and assessments of ESD attributes in the programme or module should be recorded.
- ASQC and CAP minutes should confirm that provision under consideration has clearly identified the contribution of the provision to the students' understanding and knowledge of the role and importance of global citizenship, social justice and equity, environmental stewardship and a future facing outlook in the programme or module.

Annual Department Monitoring Report

- The report should consider the extent to which the provision of the Department is supporting the university's ESD ambition, in particular the ambition to ensure that every student is exposed to the ideas of sustainable development within the context of their programme of study.
- Enhancement activities designed to make ESD more visible within the Department should be presented.
- The Department report should reflect upon their contribution to the ESD aims of the university, the guidance provided by the QAA and HEA and consider the extent to which the expectations of the guidance and Chapter B3 of the Quality Code have been met.
- Staff development requirements and other actions and resources needed to support ESD enhancement activities should be considered and appropriate recommendations made.

Programme Annual Report

- The Programme report should consider the role played by the formal and informal curricula in delivering ESD within the programme.
- The report should make clear how global citizenship, social justice and equity, environmental stewardship and a future facing outlook have been included in the provision. Enhancement actions in respect of these four areas should be presented.
- The contribution of PAL and volunteering opportunities should be evaluated alongside the opportunities provided by the UWE Futures Award.
- The contribution of dissertation or project modules, group work activities, and employability enhancements such as placements and workplace learning should all be evaluated for their contribution to ESD.
- The contribution of curriculum enrichment activities such as external speakers or field visits should be reported.

Annual Module Report

- The module report should consider the contribution of the module to meeting the ESD aims of the university, the expectations of the QAA–HEA guidance and Chapter B3 of the Quality Code.
- Particular attention should be given to the assessment of specific learning outcomes with an ESD component.
- Module reports should consider inter alia the effectiveness of contribution to ESD arising from group work, projects, field visits, external speakers, work placements, PAL activities and extra curricula activities present within the module.

Periodic Curriculum Review

- Periodic Curriculum Review provides the opportunity for the discipline to reflect upon its engagement with the university's ESD ambitions and to consider how to enhance visibility and activity relating to ESD in the provision.
- Opportunities to consider enhancements to learning outcomes, assessments and informal curricula activities supportive of ESD should be considered as part of the review.
- Recommendations for ESD actions should be included in the Critical Evaluation Document (CED).
- The CED should reflect upon the guidance provided by the QAA and HEA and consider the extent to which the provision meets the ESD aims of the university and the expectations of the QAA guidance and Chapter B3 of the Quality Code.
- Reference should be made to the graduate outcomes identified in the QAA Guidance.

Periodic Curriculum Review

- Faculty Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) and the Faculty Curriculum Approval Panel (CAP) in approving changes as a result of Periodic Curriculum Review should note examples of ESD enhancement or good practice.
- Periodic Curriculum Review reports and Programme Action Plans should document the presence of ESD to date and the intended enhancements of the provision in order to demonstrate that students will have the opportunity to develop understanding and knowledge about the role and importance of global citizenship, social justice and equity, environmental stewardship and a future facing outlook in their programme.

Environmental Management Standard

- UWE, Bristol has an Institution-wide certification to the Environmental Management Standard BS: EN ISO14001:2004.
- Perhaps uniquely this certification covers BOTH the operations of the university and our teaching and learning.
- In May 2016 the external audit of our EMS again confirmed that UWE continued to be certified to EN ISO14001:2004. We are working towards the ISO14001 2015 version for certification in summer 2017.
- The internal and external audit processes for certification purposes explicitly consider the university's ESD aims and actions.

NUS Responsible Futures

- The University and the SU at UWE, working in partnership, became the first, post pilot phase, institution in the country to be accredited by the NUS to the Responsible Futures mark.
- This accreditation recognises the partnership working by the Students' Union at UWE Bristol and the University to promote and embed education for sustainable development (ESD) in its curricula, to help students to understand the sustainability challenge facing society and preparing them to contribute to the green and low-carbon economy.
- This accreditation represents external recognition of the difficulty and impact of the work being undertaken to help every UWE Bristol student become a globally responsible and future-facing graduate.



Achieving the Primary ESD Goal

- As part of the Responsible Futures accreditation process we were able to confirm, and then have external verification of the claim, that in Academic Year 2014/15 all our UG and PGT programmes of study provided the opportunity for students to engage with the idea of sustainability in the context of their discipline.
- In 2015/16 we maintained this position.
- This is a major achievement and UWE may well be the only university in the United Kingdom in which this claim can be verified.
- UWE's annual Quality Management and Enhancement Framework, and annual progress meetings with Academic Departments provide one of the mechanisms through which we audit and track progress with ESD in the curricula.
- The cross university staff group, Knowledge Exchange for Sustainability Education, is critical to the success of our ESD initiatives.



QMEF Reflections

- The overall approach and nature of questions posed required the full cooperation of UWE's Academic Services
- The approach was approved by the University's Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee on behalf of Academic Board.
- Periodic Curriculum Review, Curriculum Design and Development and Annual Reporting outputs are incorporated into the annual ESD reporting processes of UWE.

QMEF Reflections

- Incorporating ESD considerations into the institutional quality management procedures is a further step towards embedding ESD into the routine business management processes of UWE.
- This is a necessary but not sufficient step towards the goal of sustainability permeating all that the university does, an integral consideration not an additional one.
- One risk of the embedded approach is that the questions are treated as a tick-box exercise.
- Training and development of both Quality Management staff and academic staff mitigates against this potential risk.

Summary

- The QMEF incorporates explicit consideration of ESD.
- It makes explicit reference to the QAA-HEA ESD Guidance and HEFCE's Sustainable Development in Higher Education framework as a context for the consideration of ESD within annual curriculum monitoring and curriculum approval and review processes.
- A guidance document for curriculum developers helps them to understand the principles and potential applications of ESD and the university's commitment.
- Specific guidance helps approval committees understand their responsibilities in reaching decisions to approve new curricula.
- Specific staff development sessions explain processes and explore how to meet the university's expectations of ESD in curriculum development and review.
- It is routine business *not* an exceptional activity.

Concluding Comments

- The QMEF is one mechanism to encourage progress and to audit outcomes.
- It is, arguably, a necessary step to embed ESD into institutional processes and procedures.
- It is insufficient on its own.
- A multi dimensional approach to quality management is required.
- It must be accompanied by a staff development process.
- Above all ESD adoption requires a cultural change process.

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