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Queen Mary University of London

Sustainability Reporting

QMUL Sustainability Report 2014/15

About the project

Summary

The 2014/15 Sustainability Report, completed by the small sustainability team at QMUL, follows the GRI G4 framework and reports against the economic, social and environmental impacts that most concern QMUL's key stakeholders. The report highlights the excellent work carried out at the university, addressing what sustainability means to QMUL and how it is intrinsically linked to the University's values.

Project partners

The 2014/15 Sustainability Report follows the GRI G4 framework. The first stage in the process of producing the report was stakeholder mapping where external and internal stakeholders were identified and clustered based on needs and influence. Key representatives within these clusters were then targeted to attend focus groups. In total 6 focus groups were held with over 50 representatives attending and engaging with key themes from the report.

The report was completed entirely by the small sustainability team from start to finish. No third parties were used to complete the design or content of the report.

The results

The problem

One problem that was encountered whilst completing the 2014/15 Sustainability Report was engaging with a large enough number of stakeholders to accurately represent QMUL and encapsulating all of their material aspects within the report. This was overcome by involving stakeholders from the very beginning and using different methods of communication. In the end, we successfully engaged with over 50 stakeholders.

The approach

The GRI G4 reporting framework was followed as it allowed us to better engage with our wider stakeholders. GRI G4 provided us with a structured framework for sustainability reporting, addressing the triple bottom line and prioritising our material aspects.

As GRI G4 is a globally recognised framework, it supports QMUL's strategy to place itself in the global market.



GREENMARY

Profile

Leading urban higher education institute, member of the Russell Group:

- 21,187 students
- 4000 staff
- Diverse student population with 155 nationalities

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Our goals

Our goal is to fully meet all of the GRI G4 reporting requirements and engage as many people as possible with this report (students, staff, other stakeholders), therefore promoting sustainability both at QMUL and in general.

Obstacles and solutions

Obstacle	Solution
Engaging a large number of stakeholders with limited time and resources.	Key stakeholders were clustered and grouped based on interests and focus groups were completed. In total 6 focus groups were carried out with over 50 representatives.
Designing the report in house with no previous report writing or design experience.	Skills were used from all of the team, with team members contributing to areas they were most competent in.
Receiving approval at a senior level.	Senior members of staff were involved in the process from the beginning in a dedicated focus group so they were fully engaged throughout.
Condensing all of the sustainability material impacts into a succinct, informative report which fully addressed the triple bottom line.	Key material aspects were included in the report and additional information and other material impacts were hyperlinked and signposted to on the website.
Promoting the report without using print media.	We used social media to promote the Sustainability Report. We were able to record levels of interaction through social media and Mailchimp. We also created summary pages which are throughout the report, this allowed us to communicate the core messages to the stakeholders.

Performance and results

The end result is a comprehensive Sustainability report, working towards GRI G4 reporting guidelines and fully addressing the triple bottom line. Ensuring key stakeholders were consulted means that all material aspects of sustainability were covered.

The future

Lessons learned

We have learnt the importance and value of engaging key stakeholders throughout the reporting process to achieve a comprehensive sustainability report which follows the GRI G4 reporting guidelines. In addition to this, using the guidelines enabled the team to address wider areas of sustainability and gain buy-in from around the organisation due to using a standardised approach.

Sharing your project

We have used multiple platforms to share our sustainability report, including social media (Twitter/Facebook), via email and in student and staff newsletters. Using social media is an extremely useful tool to reach the



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student body, an increasingly online community. Social media and Mailchimp also allow us to monitor engagement levels with the report.

We have also presented the report internally to senior members of staff and it has been presented at numerous meetings for approval, this has resulted in increased engagement at the executive level at QMUL.

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

It is fantastic to be shortlisted for a Green Gown Award as it highlights that we have been able to produce a high quality report entirely in house. The sustainability team is growing and our presence at QMUL is also continuously spreading. Being shortlisted allows us to promote the sustainability report and our work more widely.

Further information

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Website: <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/about/sustainability/index.html>

2014/15 Sustainability Report: <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/about/sustainability/commitments/index.html>