



University of Leeds Learning&Skills Creating Sustainable Futures

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

About the project

Summary

Ten, cross disciplinary Discovery Themes have been developed to ensure students from across the University have access to core knowledge and skills which underpin the Leeds Curriculum. Most Leeds undergraduate programmes include provision for students to study discovery modules as part of their degree. One theme, 'Creating Sustainable Futures' allows students from all disciplines to enroll on options from over 100 modules within the sub-theme relating to the topic, whether it is from a scientific, social or economic angle.

Profile

- University of Leeds
- 31,906 students (includes full and part time students)
- 7517 staff
- Urban

Project partners

The Sustainability Service joined forces with the Sustainability Research Institute (SRI) and the Student Education Service (SES) to support the development and delivery of the Creating Sustainable Futures (CSF) Discovery theme.

The results

The problem

The University of Leeds understands its role in delivering Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Clearly teaching and learning opportunities span the wide range of disciplines, and opportunities for engaging with ESD vary across programmes of study. Specifically the project is critical to the university as our main tool to help us achieve our commitment to increase sustainability literacy within the whole student body and provide opportunities to all students, regardless of their course to gain a critical understanding of sustainability issues during their time at the University.

The approach

The modules within the CSF theme are open to all students at the University, no matter what they study and which year they are in. The Sustainability Service helped to create the CSF module using a variety of different tools and approaches which help students engage with real world problems, and gain invaluable skills and knowledge that they can benefit from and take with them after graduation.

Our goals

As part of our newly launched Sustainability Strategy, the University is committed to building knowledge and capacity and integrate sustainability into student learning. The CSF modules help students at the university explore the various different aspects of sustainability and broaden their skills and knowledge on the issues





facing society. The modules also encourage students to engage with real world sustainability initiatives and projects and ensure that students understand the importance of sustainability.

Obstacles and solutions

Changes to curriculum	 The Discovery Themes have top level leadership, funding and operational support from the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Student Education as part of Leeds Curriculum. Each Discovery Theme has subject specific senior leaders appointed with ring fenced time and funding.
Buy in form across faculties	A cross university advisory group of 12 academics provided expertise, time and critical friend advice to the development of the CSF discovery Theme. Teaching staff, leaders of the 110 modules in the CSF Theme, have worked to align optional and voluntary modules to the Discovery Theme and Leeds Curriculum.

Performance and results

Over the past 3 academic years, CSF modules have been undertaken by over 10,000 students. The number of students undertaking the modules has increased each year since it was first offered. In addition, new CSF modules have been made available each year to give greater opportunity for students from all faculties studying a range of disciplines.

The future

Lessons learned

We set ambitious targets for this project and we have met them through working closely across relevant departments in the University. There is an appetite amongst students and prospective students for ESD, working closely with them as well as academic and support staff helped overcome potential barriers to success.

Sharing your project

- A Discovery Themes Fair for staff and students is held twice yearly. Module leaders and the Sustainability Service attends to directly engage with new and returning students who are interested in choosing elective modules, explain and find suitable modules for them.
- Leeds Student TV created an introductory video which is publicly available.
- Information on the project is also disseminated via a number of channels including publications, website, meetings with peer organisations, staff and student inductions, reports to conferences.

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

It is really great to be recognized by the sector for our continuing efforts to create a more sustainable university and support our students and staff in becoming involved with our initiatives. We also know the importance of sharing best practice, as a two way process, with other Higher and Further Education Institutions.

Further information

Contact name: Claire Bastin Position: Sustainability Manager

Phone number – desk and mobile: 0113 343 6573 or 07702 338788

Organisation's website: http://sustainability.leeds.ac.uk/

Organisation's social media links:







Twitter: https://twitter.com/UoL_Sus

• Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/UoLSustainability

Instagram: UoL_Sus

