



Green Gown
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Finalist's case study

University of the West of England, Bristol

Leadership

Leadership for Sustainability at UWE Bristol



Profile

- UWE, Bristol
- 270000 students
- 3300 staff
- Multiple locations in Bristol and Gloucestershire

About the project

Summary

Jim Longhurst has transformed UWE's engagement with the environment and sustainability agenda, embedding consideration of sustainability in to the university's business decisions, educational offering, estate management and interactions with the local communities. His actions have enabled UWE, Bristol to include sustainability in every UG and PG degree programmes benefitting all students, irrespective of their programme of study. He is committed to ensuring that graduates are equipped to face the sustainable development challenges of the 21st century by integrating sustainability into curricula, research and campus operations. He has established high level policy support, embedded sustainability in routine processes, embraced diverse ways to achieve sustainability goals, developed novel approaches to communicating strategy and worked tirelessly to distribute ownership, accountability and responsibility in the routine processes of UWE. As a leader in the sustainability field he works with HEA, HEFCE, QAA, EAUC, NUS and professional bodies to promote sustainability policy and practice.

Project partners

The primary partners are the 3300 staff and c27000 students of UWE and the staff and student representative bodies. Other partners include our suppliers, neighbours and visitors as well as the QAA, HEA and professional bodies, discipline groups and our partners in industry, commerce and the voluntary sector.

The results

The problem

Embedding sustainability thinking and action into a large, diverse, multi-site, multi-disciplinary university and ensuring ownership by staff and students.

The approach

Ensuring VC, Board of Governor and other senior staff support is in place.

Ensuring the high level policy and strategy is aligned with sustainability outcomes particularly in UWE's Strategy 2020 which, in turn, gives authority to the institutional Sustainability Plan.

Building cross university support structures - the Sustainability Board, the Knowledge Exchange for Sustainability Education staff network and the SU Green Team.

Appointing excellent staff

Developing the whole staff capability and capacity in sustainability and especially ESD



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Working with professional bodies and discipline groupings
Working with the Students' Union especially elected officers and through the Green Team.

Our goals

To meet the aims and ambition expressed in UWE Sustainability Plan 2013 - 2020 - see

<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/aboutus/visionandmission/sustainability/governanceandstrategy/sustainabilitydocuments.aspx>

This plan is endorsed by the VC, the Chair of the Board of Governors and the President of the Students' Union.

Obstacles and solutions

Obstacle	Solution
Awareness	Multi-faceted communications strategy that does not assume prior knowledge.
Policy and performance	Establish high level policy support, embed expectations in routine processes.
Expectation setting - how do you know you have done it?	Embrace diverse ways to demonstrate achievement of sustainability goals.
Capacity and capability constraints	Dedicated staff teams but over time distribute ownership, accountability and responsibility into all teams but ensure training opportunities are in place. An example is the inclusion of ESD within the UWE Academic Development Programme for new staff.
Engagement	Embedding into the organisational decision making processes. Demonstrate sustainability is not an add on optional extra. Embedding reporting and accountability into the Quality Management and Enhancement Framework is an important step in this regard.
Sustainability Fatigue	Celebrate, reinforce and embrace diverse array of ways in which sustainability goals can be manifested and achieved.

Performance and results

Good progress is being made with meeting the Sustainability Plan aims. Progress with the individual themes is reported on a quarterly basis to the Sustainability Board where accountability and responsibility resides.

Annual reporting to the Vice Chancellor's Directorate, Board of Governors, Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and other deliberative and executive groupings ensure widespread awareness and action. Annual reports and other relevant documents are published on the Policies, plans and targets page of the Sustainability web site at

<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/about/corporateinformation/sustainability/policiesplansandtargets.aspx>



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The future

Lessons learned

A strategic long term approach embracing a wide range of stakeholders is much more likely to deliver desired goals.

Sharing your project

Longhurst shares his sustainability learning, approach and ideas locally, nationally and internationally through conference presentations, seminars, workshops, publications and through engagement with the EAUC, NUS, Hefce professional bodies and learned societies.

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

UWE is pleased that its Jim Longhurst's leadership of the university's approach to embedding sustainability across the organisation has been recognised as worthy of shortlisting in the 2016 Green Gown Award for Leadership. We have shared the shortlisting success widely within the university and amongst partners.

Further information

Professor James Longhurst

Assistant Vice Chancellor, Environment and Sustainability

Professor of Environmental Science,

University of the West of England, Frenchay Campus, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol, BS16 1QY, U.K.

Email: James.Longhurst@uwe.ac.uk. Tel 44 (0)117 32 83692, Mobile 07786 661667

Staff profile <http://people.uwe.ac.uk/Pages/person.aspx?accountname=campus\J-LONGHURST>

UWE web site <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/>

Sustainability at UWE <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/aboutus/visionandmission/sustainability.aspx>

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