

TITLE:

Using the Curriculum to Implement ISO14001 at Elmwood College

DATE:

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SUMMARY

Elmwood College is situated on the edge of a small rural town in Fife, Scotland. They gained accreditation to the International Standard for Environmental Management Systems ISO14001 in 1996. By using the curriculum as a mechanism for meeting the requirements of the Standard students are taught how to comply with ISO14001 as part of their course making them particularly attractive to future employers.

EAUC COMMENT

This is a fantastic example that illustrates the ability to use a formal Environmental Management System as a tool in the environmental education of students, staff and local community.



PROJECT PARTNERS

British Standards Institute (BSI), Carbon Trust, EAUC and their Campus Sustainability Programme, Local Biodiversity Partnership, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Take a Pride in Fife – Local Authority Environmental Network, The Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Group

THE PROBLEM

In 1995 the Scottish Strategy for Environmental Education was published with over 90 recommendations on how environmental education should be taken forward for the following ten years. Elmwood College believed that in order to demonstrate its compliance with the strategy it should gain accreditation to a recognised environmental management system standard.

THE APPROACH

Elmwood integrated the ISO14001 system within the College's Team Management system which provides a framework for teaching activity (Organic Farming, Golf Course Management and Land Management etc). Students are taught about the requirements of the Standard as part of their course which prepares them for future jobs. Over the years the College has developed strong links with third party organisations both locally and nationally. The College allocates £2,500 per annum and one and a half person days per week to maintaining the standard but no additional funding is provided to meet the cost of environmental compliance which has to be met from existing budgets. The ISO14001 management system is externally audited twice annually by BSI.

GOALS

At the time ISO14001 was introduced, the main goals were to:

- Comply with the requirements of the Scottish Strategy for Environmental Education
- Develop new opportunities for consultancy and collaborative projects

As part of their commitment to continual improvement Elmwood is aiming to:

- Embed the concept of sustainability in the college curriculum and to take a lead nationally in sustainable development education
- Ensure continuity of the project through a period of staff and other institutional changes
- Be a centre of excellence for environmental education

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

- Resistance to change
- Conflicting priorities
- Environmental overkill leading to apathy
- Lack of legislative or sector drive or indeed any tangible incentive to continue
- Patience and perseverance – lead by example not by dictation
- Ensure that all concerned are aware that an environmental issue, once raised, will not simply go away if ignored. Wear people down by attrition.
- A need to constantly re-invent ourselves - never let up
- Use external audit as a driver to ensure continued compliance - promise jam tomorrow

PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

Elmwood has had very successful outcomes including:

- Consultancy opportunities and collaborative projects;
- Giving students experience of undertaking a course that meets the needs of ISO14001 (e.g. golf-course management);
- Reducing quantity and costs of waste and energy;
- Improvements to land management and promotion of biodiversity;
- Compliance with legislation;
- Strong links with industry and the environmental sector;
- Raising the corporate image of the institution.

LESSONS LEARNT

Environmentalism is not difficult or abstruse; but it does require commitment, enthusiasm and a certain amount of tenacity.

Good environmental management is good business is good educational practice.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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EAUC Campus Sustainability Programme
www.eauc.org.uk/campus_sustainability_project



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