

University of Manchester

Courses

Sustainable Consumption Institute Centre for Doctoral Training (SCI CDT)

Section 1 About the project

Summary

An innovative international multidisciplinary PhD training programme, supporting the development of a new generation of top flight early career researchers capable of working across disciplinary, cultural and international boundaries in pivotal areas of environmental sustainability. To date, the SCI CDT has raised funding from a variety of sources to support 35 PhD students. This student community has published 23 papers in peer reviewed academic journals and 3 book chapters; and presented papers and posters at 89 national and international conferences. The students have helped develop and deliver level 1 and 2 undergraduate courses to >200 undergraduates, and organized 2 successful museum-based public engagement events, involving family learning activities with hundreds of adults and children from local communities.

Project partners

The Faculties of Humanities, Engineering and Physical Sciences, Life Sciences and Medical and Human Sciences

Section 2 The results

The problem

The design and implementation of a sustainability focused cross-disciplinary Centre for Doctoral Training.

The approach

Funded by a mix of industry and mainstream sources, students undertake a rigorous and challenging programme of integrated cross-disciplinary tasks and activities (e.g. engineers working with sociologists). The programme emphasises cross-disciplinary collaboration through effective communication, networking and team work. It simulates and provides hands-on experience of real-world practice using Enquiry and Problem Based Learning techniques. Innovative aspects of this programme include:

- Added synergy from belonging to a community contributing to a new and developing research institute rather than a single discipline-focused department or school;



Profile

- HEI
- 39,732 students (includes full and part time students)
- 10,712 staff
- Urban



Category sponsored by

- Contributing to the development of a best practice model for trans-disciplinary research;
- Helping to progress University strategic goals such as increased community/public engagement, and embedding sustainable development in the curriculum;
- Developing innovation in curriculum design which can be used elsewhere;
- Demonstrating the value of research training to industry and other external partners.

Our goals

To develop an outstanding community of early career researchers readily able to collaborate across disciplinary, cultural and international boundaries in pivotal areas of environmental sustainability and to communicate effectively with a wide range of audiences.

Obstacles and solutions

How to satisfy training needs in widely differing disciplines	Keep the programme high level, with a focus on the development of early career researcher professional skills development.
How to satisfy widely differing faculty and school processes	Careful design of programme activities to ensure coherence.
Tension between demands of individual PhD programmes and the CDT training activities	Regular meetings between CDT team and PhD students with their supervisors.
Financial sustainability	Develop a portfolio of matched funding initiatives.

Performance and results

To date SCI CDT students have contributed towards 3 published book chapters, 23 peer reviewed academic journal papers, 89 academic conferences, 1 SCI published report and 3 SCI working papers, and supplied written evidence to the Sustainable Food Inquiry, Environmental Audit Committee.

Over the past 4 years, students have contributed to the development of level 1 ('Environmental Challenges') and level 2 ('Manchester Sustainable City Projects') sustainability themed undergraduate enquiry based learning courses (planning, preparation, delivery, assessment and evaluation). Both courses accommodate up to 50 students.

In their 3rd year each cohort plans and delivers a major community engagement project. To date, the projects have involved collaboration with Manchester Museum and the Museum of Science and Industry (co-ordinating contributions from several NGOs) to run day-long family events around the themes of sustainable textiles and foods. Both events engaged with hundreds of people of all ages.

They have also organised and presented 2 business engagement events with sponsors (Tesco) aimed at demonstrating the significance of academic scholarship to the commercial sector.

Section 3 The future

We are busy recruiting our 2013 intake, and the quality of shortlisted candidates has been exemplary.

Lessons learned

The value of being creative, flexible and vision led.

Sharing your project

Our latest Annual Report and the Programme Handbook are available on our website. Our programme activities are widely reported via the SCI media office. Our model and programme have been presented at international workshops and conferences.

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

Invaluable external recognition of a programme that has developed over the past 5 years.

Further information

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