

QUALITY FUTURES: INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH QUALITY SYSTEMS

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EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY: INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

- Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development (June 2012)
- Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative
- UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)
- However, curriculum innovation for sustainability has taken place mainly in the slipstreams of higher education, with **patchy progress** mainly reliant on champions
- This project was funded through a scheme to **catalyse and upscale** efforts in sustainability education through quality systems, working at both sector and institutional levels



THE PROJECT AND ITS AIMS



Title: *Leading Curriculum Change for Sustainability*

Funder: Higher Education Funding Council for England

Timing: Oct 2010 – Sept 2012

Aim: to improve institutional leadership by progressing Education for Sustainability through quality assurance and enhancement

Strategic need: to reorient graduate skills towards the challenges of sustainable development

Key outputs: strategic guidance for universities and higher education, to drive innovation and leadership for sustainability in the sector

APPROACH

Sector level

- Collaborative work with QAA
- Expert Advisory Board: members from UK higher education agencies, vice-chancellors, business, community, government
- Wider involvement of main UK higher education agencies

Institutional level

- Five UK universities carried out one year pilot projects to develop their work on Education for Sustainability through quality assurance and enhancement processes



QAA'S ROLE



- Focusing on Education for Sustainability in the *curriculum*, rather than *operational practice*
- Clear links with quality assurance and enhancement
- Anthony McClaran, Chair of the project's Expert Advisory Board
- Consultancy from Dr Luran Bellingham and colleagues in QAA's Research, Development & Partnerships team

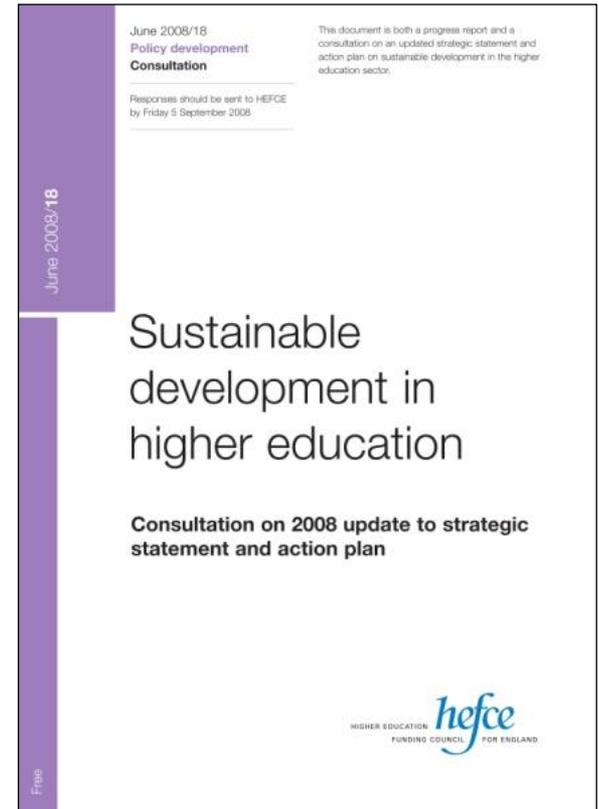
EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN UK HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

‘Our vision is that, within the next ten years, the higher education sector in this country will be recognised as a major contributor to society’s efforts to achieve sustainability through:

i) The skills and knowledge that its graduates learn and put into practice

ii) Its research and exchange of knowledge through business, community and public policy engagement

iii) Its own strategies and operations’

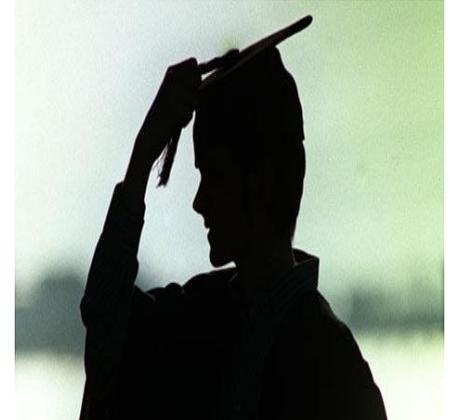


From *Sustainable Development in Higher Education*
(Higher Education Funding Council for England, Feb 2009)

STUDENTS, EMPLOYERS & SUSTAINABILITY

From First Year Student Attitudes Towards, and Skills in, Sustainable Development:

- 80% — sustainability skills will be important to future employers
- 65% — sustainability should be delivered through existing curriculum, not stand-alone modules
- 75-90% — sustainability skills are relevant to their degree courses



(Higher Education Academy & National Union of Students, 2011)

Leadership Skills for a Sustainable Economy

- 93% of organisations surveyed — likely to incorporate sustainability further into strategic plans over next five years
- Growing engagement of professional bodies with sustainability

(Business in the Community report, 2010)



EDUCATION FOR
SUSTAINABILITY IN
TEACHING & LEARNING
QUALITY SYSTEMS

EMBEDDING IN QUALITY LEARNING & TEACHING



Project focus

- Challenges of embedding principles of Education for Sustainability into institutions' development and enhancement of their curricula
- Formal processes for quality assurance
- Mechanisms for quality enhancement

PROJECT PILOTS – DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Pilot University	Approach
Aston University	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Connecting with strategies on low carbon and green IT- Professional and curriculum development with external partners and linked to industry professional practice
University of Brighton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Aligning Education for Sustainability (EfS) with strategies on community engagement- Linking existing education themes and assurance processes
University of Exeter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Building on interdisciplinary sustainability research profile- One academic School involved in pilot work to develop an EfS approach that can be used across the institution
University of Gloucestershire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Positioning EfS in the corporate approach to sustainability- Strengthening quality assurance frameworks to include EfS, working with quality leads and supporting innovation with quality enhancement funds
Oxford Brookes University	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Engaging the teaching development unit with EfS as part of the university's development of graduate attributes- Aligning EfS with strategies for global citizenship

EMERGING THEMES FROM THE PILOT PROJECTS

- Inclusion of Education for Sustainability in institutional strategic plans, key performance indicators and values statements
- Utilising staff induction and development programmes
- Supporting the process of course design and curriculum planning for Education for Sustainability
- Importance of communication:
 - Guidance and handbooks
 - Websites
 - Toolkits
 - Papers and articles
 - Events and workshops

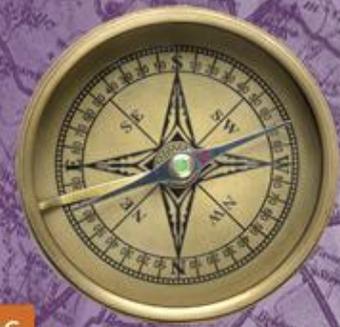
GUIDE TO QUALITY AND EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

PART 1 - ORIENTATION

PART 2 - PATHFINDER

PART 3 - DESTINATIONS

PART 4 - KITBAG



PROJECT TOOLKIT: <http://efsandquality.glos.ac.uk>

Content: with video clips and downloadable tools, based on the experiences of the five universities and advice from sector experts

- 1. Orientation** – introduces the project and the landscape around EfS and Quality in HE
- 2. Pathfinder** – experiences and issues in connecting EfS with HE quality systems
- 3. Destinations** – reflects on the significance of the project and possible future pathways
- 4. Kitbag** – contains project materials and tools, relevant literature and key reports

THE *UK QUALITY CODE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION*

The *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* sets out the expectations that all providers of UK higher education are required to meet



CHAPTER B3: LEARNING & TEACHING

Themes that cross subject boundaries

“These themes reflect topics which may be considered to have a broad relevance to the purposes of higher education and its wider context in society. Where the themes are embedded within the curriculum and form an integral part of a programme of study, learning and teaching activities are designed to take them into account.

These themes may include ... **Education for Sustainability**”

SUMMARY: PROJECT OUTCOMES

OUTCOMES – FOR THE SECTOR:

- *EfS included in UK Quality Code*
- Informing the development of **QAA guidance** on Education for Sustainability (EfS)
- Development of online **Guide to Quality and EfS in Higher Education**
- **Engagement of sector leaders** in key agencies and organisations
- **Raised profile** of EfS and encouraged **inter-agency collaboration**

OUTCOMES – FOR INSTITUTIONS:

- Legacy of **changes and development** in five partner institutions
- Development of **guidance briefs and practical tools** on EfS
- Identified **professional development** needs and opportunities
- Developed frameworks for **EfS as strategic education agenda**
- Consideration of **pathways for monitoring and assurance** in EfS

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PROJECT WEBSITE:

<http://insight.glos.ac.uk/sustainability/hefcelgmquality>

PROJECT TOOLKIT:

<http://efsandquality.glos.ac.uk>