

RESPONSIBLE FUTURES CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ESTATE MANAGEMENT

Sustainability Student Initiatives and Student Officers for Sustainability

Related Responsible Futures Criteria:
POC003, IN008

Overview of initiative/action

Insert In collaboration with its Student Officers for Sustainability, the University College of Estate Management (UCEM) created a sustainability student initiatives schedule which launched in September 2022. This was intended to address the student auditor feedback at UCEM's third Responsible Futures audit in June 2022, and the introduction of a new, whole institution approach to sustainability.

The initiatives were drawn from feedback (SOS-UK Skills Survey), Responsible Futures audit, Student Rep discussions and in collaboration with the Student Officers for Sustainability with the aim to create a routine opportunity for students to engage with sustainability information and activities on a variety of topics.

As part of this work, in April 2023 UCEM delivered its first ever Go Green Week

including a virtual escape room developed and hosted by our Student Officers.

Impact of initiative

UCEM is a solely online institution and therefore student engagement outside of the formal curriculum can be complex. With the introduction of these initiatives, it has given us increased opportunities to communicate and engage with our students on topics such as: COP27, veganism, intersectionality, eco-anxiety and connecting with nature.

Our Student Officers have been at the heart of this work, creating content and facilitating debates and discussions on sustainability in the built environment. Their passion and creativity have been infectious, and it has been great to have them engage with UCEM staff across the institution.

UCEM will be facilitating the SOS-UK Skills Survey this autumn and we intend to use this in contrast to UCEM's Skills Survey results in 2021 to measure some of the impact that these initiatives have had. We acknowledge that it will take several academic years for the sustainability student initiatives to be seen as business as usual for our students. For 23/24 we will be making enhancements to the schedule, again in collaboration with the Student Officers for Sustainability, with the aim of continuing to broaden the perceptions of sustainability and climate action, and to further different voices, stories and experiences from across the world.

Role that RF criteria/programme has played in this initiative

We're grateful for the opportunity to meet with colleagues from other institutions participating in Responsible Futures and SOS-UK to share ideas and best practice.

These conversations have greatly supported our work in this area.

Student auditor feedback at UCEM's 2022 audit demonstrated clear appetite in seeing an increase in opportunities for students to engage with sustainability both on and off their programme. We're looking forward to the opportunity to share UCEM's progress with our auditors at our next audit in Summer 2024.

The Responsible Futures Criteria:

- **POC003** - One or more named elected student officer has agreed to lead on sustainability issues for the students' union this academic year.
- **IN008** - Within the current academic year, the institution has made funding, or related resources, available to staff and students so that they can develop their own projects that support the aims of Responsible Futures.

Additional Comments

At UCEM, we strongly believe that our students are the future of the industry and have the capacity to make a tremendous impact on creating a more sustainable future. That's why we are committed to providing our students with the knowledge, skills, and resources to tackle some of the challenges the built environment faces today.

We recognise the importance of our students' role as influencers and ambassadors of change. As such, we strive to create a learning environment that empowers our students to champion, critique, and advocate for positive change.

“Sustainability isn't just good for the planet, it's good for the soul! Finding creative ways to reduce our environmental impact can be a fun and rewarding adventure to get everyone involved.”

-Donna Modesté, Student Officer for Sustainability, about UCEM's Go Green Week escape room.