

Teaching standards
case study



Sustainability management at Leeds University

bsi.



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



An academic and standards-maker

I teach sustainability and environmental management in Leeds University's School of Earth and Environment – one of the largest in UK and ranked 5th globally. The School's key strength is in combining natural and social sciences to the teaching and research in climate change and finding solutions to sustainability issues.

In terms of research, my interests are in consumer and retail sector behaviour change on sustainability issues, which includes 'green products', evaluation of behaviour interventions and the impacts of consumer behaviour on sustainability issues in supply-chains. And for many years I've been involved in the development of environmental management standards through membership of BSI standards committees.

Teaching standards and standardization

We've moved from teaching a specific module on environmental and sustainability standards to integrating standards across our degree programmes. This has helped students see the value of standards within specific topics rather than learning about standards just to pass the module.

This approach has also helped us to include more field work and practicals, such as a day conducting a mock audit of the university's ISO 14001 environmental management system certification or using parts of a documentary on working conditions in Indian textile mills to evaluate using ISO 26000 guidance on social responsibility. Many postgraduates also do three-month industry placements, helping an organization implement standards or other standards-related projects.

Tools and resources

BSI's British Standards Online (BSOL) is essential for giving students access to the original standards. We also make use of videos of organizations using standards, alongside research evidence from journals and case studies on the effectiveness of standards. Guest lectures from consultants and organization representatives on their experience of using sustainability-related standards either in person or are also used whenever possible.

Learning outcomes

On our programmes, students get to understand the strategic role of standards, plus the range of specific sustainability standards available and how to implement the key ones. These include ISO 14001, BS 8555 EMS

phase implementation, ISO 26000 guidance on social responsibility, ISO 14040 environmental management life cycle assessment, BS ISO 14064-1 greenhouse gases at organizational level, ISO 14031 environmental performance evaluation, and ISO 50001 energy management systems. They also become familiar with standards and regulations produced by other organisations, such as the Forest Stewardship Council, Fairtrade and the European Commission.

“On our programmes, students get to understand the strategic role of standards”

Employability

Most of our graduates go on to secure jobs in sustainability teams in organizations and consultancies, and so standards awareness, knowledge and the skills required to apply them, are absolutely vital for them. In these sort of professional roles, they'll use standards day-to-day, embedding sustainability into an organization's core practices and processes.



Learn more at: www.environment.leeds.ac.uk/see



Professor William Young

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About BSI Education

Universities make a significant contribution to standardization by teaching about standards, contributing academic research, and being standards-makers. BSI Education builds relationships and creates programmes with universities to help raise awareness of the benefits of standards to society and the economy and to encourage and increase participation in standards-making.



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