TEN REASONS TO BUILD RESILIENCE INTO THE FUTURE OF YOUR UNIVERSITY
A BUSINESS GUIDE FOR UNIVERSITY GOVERNORS

Governance
BUILDING RESILIENCE INTO THE FUTURE OF YOUR UNIVERSITY

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FOREWORD

The Committee of University Chairs has recently published the Higher Education Code of Governance. The Code’s purpose is to identify the key values and practices on which the effective governance of UK HEIs is based, in order to help deliver institutional mission and success.

In the Code, we made clear that governing bodies have a clear responsibility to support the sustainability of their institution, for example the Code explicitly states that Boards:

“... must rigorously assess all aspects of the institution’s sustainability, in the broadest sense, using an appropriate range of mechanisms which include relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) not just for the financial sustainability of the institution but also for its impact on the environment.”

CUC is therefore committed to addressing the issues arising from the imperative for sustainable development. Simply put, this means playing our part in ensuring we support the global sustainability agenda for a strong, healthy and just society living within environmental limits. This means encouraging institutions to develop policies, plans and strategy to support sustainable development and implementing these into the business of the university both in their educational role and in the management of their estate.

I believe that the sector has made enormous strides in this area over the last few years, but there remains much more to do if we are to ensure that all higher education staff and students have the opportunity to live, study and work in a sustainable environment as well as develop and use the skills and understanding required to contribute to global sustainability throughout their careers. Each institution is unique and there is no common template that can be applied in rising to this challenge. However, I welcome the publication of “Building the resilience into the future of your University” because I believe that by considering the ideas and possibilities set out in this document universities will be well placed to develop their own plans and effectively prepare their institution for the sustainable development challenges of the 21st century.

Geoff Dawson
Chair, Committee of University Chairs

INTRODUCTION

Economic, social and environmental sustainability is about assuring the future through developing resilience and adaptability in staff and students, through building coherence and synergies across all university operations, and ensuring our sector’s impact is beneficial at all levels. Many universities already play a significant positive role through their governance, research, teaching and learning, campus management and use, business and investment, and their impact on staff, students and local community.

The aim of this guide is to demonstrate the business benefits that your HEI can capitalise on by making Sustainability Resilience and Opportunity a top team, top table issue, one that complements and enriches current agendas.

Our students are entering a world characterised by rapid change, uncertainty and risk in socio-economic and environmental conditions which will affect them throughout their professional and personal lives. As Higher Education Institutions (HEI’s), we hold a unique position in society and have an important and influential role to play. What we also have is an opportunity, as a sector with a social conscience, to lead change in addressing the many challenges and opportunities educating citizens and decision-makers for tomorrow presents.

This guide has been developed by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC) and Plymouth University, with support from the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) and the Committee of University Chairs (CUC); working together to lead change.
TEN BUSINESS BENEFITS

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BENEFIT TWO
MANAGE COSTS

BENEFIT THREE
PLAN AHEAD, MITIGATE RISK AND STRENGTHEN COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

BENEFIT FOUR
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BE A LEADER

CATALYSE LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS AND CREATE GROWTH

IMPROVE THE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS OF YOUR STUDENTS

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ATTRACT AND RETAIN THE MOST TALENTED STAFF

CREATE LEARNING RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS, RESEARCH FACILITIES FOR STAFF

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ENHANCE THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE
BUSINESS BENEFIT 1

There is growing evidence that the adoption of sustainability measures can turn into significant levels of profit. Businesses across all industries agree that acting sustainably is not only essential to remaining competitive, but can also increase competitive advantage and advance their Corporate Social Responsibility profile.

A recent collaborative research report between Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Boston Consulting Group found that 37% of the companies they surveyed reported profit from sustainability initiatives, up from 23% in 2011\(^1\).

Research commissioned by the British Standards Institution surveyed 150 sustainability executives across 20 industry sectors, from firms with more than £350 million in annual revenues. 70% of respondents stated that executives at their firm regarded sustainability as a driver for growth and over 50% stated that it was important to the financial performance of their firm over the next two years. Commitment is strong, with over 55% of those surveyed expecting their budget for sustainability initiatives to increase in the next financial year\(^2\).

CASE STUDY

The Centre for Global Eco-Innovation is the only centre of its kind in Europe. The £9.8M development unites the expertise, resources and global contacts of Lancaster University, the University of Liverpool, and Inventya Limited.

The aim of the centre is to form collaborative Research and Development and commercialisation partnerships with businesses, to enable and drive innovation for a better environment. It supports the development, exploitation and export of new products, processes and services for the global marketplace that have positive environmental benefits.

The centre, part funded by the European Regional Development Fund, has the ambition to work with over 285 businesses in the region, resulting in the creation of 318 new jobs; the development of 150 new products and generating £45M in wealth for the Northwest of England by 2017.

For more case studies please visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk

A question a Governor can ask:

Is your university investing in sustainable operations as part of its financial objectives?

Centre for Global Eco-Innovation
BUSINESS BENEFIT 2

Waste reduction and energy efficiency provide a strong basis on which to make the initial business case for implementing sustainability strategies. Improving resource efficiency is not only good for the environment (and therefore also your reputation) but can also realise significant cost savings for your institution. Greater efficiency affords possibilities for new initiatives, and the opportunity to develop synergies across all arms of your business, in estates, procurement, teaching and learning and research.

CASE STUDY

The University of Greenwich will install a biofuel (glycerol) fired Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant at its Medway Campus in Kent this year – believed to be the first of its kind in the world.

The project will see around 1,800 tonnes of glycerol delivered to the campus per year, providing 8,000 hours of heat and power for offices, laboratories and scientific equipment.

Financial payback on the project is expected within seven years, with the carbon footprint of the campus reduced by 2,600 tonnes per annum - 43% of the university’s target of 6,000 tonnes per annum by 2020.

Additional benefits include training opportunities in renewable energy applications for future students and researchers, as well as new research projects.

The university has also provided workshops of the glycerol-CHP system to a wide range of different communities, including council planners.

For more case studies please visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk

A question a Governor can ask:

If your student population grows, will you be increasing investment in the student experience or paying higher energy bills?

CASE STUDY

The University of Gloucestershire has adopted a steady, simple but long term approach to carbon reduction, focusing on ensuring that all decisions at all levels consider the sustainability implications, maximising the effectiveness of existing budgets by prioritising zero and low-cost efficiency measures.

The results of this approach have been impressive, giving annual financial savings of almost a quarter of a million pounds. Energy consumption has reduced by over four million kWh, with direct carbon emissions reduced by 25% against a 2005/06 baseline.

This is despite a 12% increase in student numbers, showing it is possible to decouple growth from rising emissions.

For more case studies please visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk
BUSINESS BENEFIT 3

Predicting the direction of national and global policy is a vital element of the planning process for any business. HEI’s must already provide information about the viability of their operations to organisations such as HEFCE and HEFCW, and all indications are that this type of regulation is on the increase; HEI’s that are slow on the uptake risk being left behind. For your institution, this is an opportunity to lead, to be at the forefront of regulatory change, ready to seize the advantage.

2019 will see the introduction of building regulations requiring ‘zero carbon’ and any renovations to existing estates must also be ‘nearly zero energy buildings’ by 2020. Adapting buildings and behaviours to cope with climate change should not be seen as a sustainability issue but as a business risk issue; in considering adaptation now, we can understand not only the potential impacts of climate change, but how we can cope/recover from them. This allows us to better highlight risk and build resilience.

Regulatory compliance can also increase your available capital. In England the HEFCE Revolving Green Fund has so far allocated £21 million in funding to UK Universities to invest in projects to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs.

A question a Governor can ask:
What are the implications of forthcoming changes in building regulations for your university estate? How significant is the risk to you?

CASE STUDY

The redevelopment of Durham Business School demonstrates how embracing sustainable technologies within existing buildings can deliver value, improve environmental performance and future-proof service-delivery.

The £16,600,000 refurbishment considered both building use and purpose and utilised a range of technologies to achieve a 34% reduction in kgCO2/m2/yr. Technologies include photovoltaic panels, voltage optimisation, insulation, LED lighting and heat recovery. The redesigned interior spaces facilitate sustainable practices with installations including motion sensitive lighting, convenient recycling points, increased access to scanning, bike storage and shower provision. The new ‘Third Space’ fosters knowledge transfer whilst cutting edge AV equipment enables the School to collaborate with organisations across the world and to share its sustainability vision.

The development assisted the Business School in maintaining demand for its PGT courses (income growth of 18% last year) and in retaining its triple accreditation with commendation for the standard of its new facilities.

For more case studies please visit
www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk

DID YOU KNOW?

A 2013 report for the Department for Energy and Climate Change indicates that businesses that are medium sized users of energy face increased costs of between 23% and 26% by 2020, as a result of climate change policies. Taxes on carbon represent over 30% of the impact of policies on electricity prices in 2020, and around 40% in 2030. This translates to over 40% of the total energy bill impact of policies in these years, being made up of taxes on carbon.
BUSINESS BENEFIT 4

Innovation is critical for the ongoing success of any enterprise and being innovative allows us to stay ahead of the game. With the growing uncertainty in the HE sector and increasing competitiveness, innovation and enterprise, can set your organisation apart.

The Confederation of British Industry reported that ‘green business’ in the UK continues to grow. Green is not just complementary to growth, but a key driver of it.¹

In 2014-2015, green business is expected to roughly halve the UK’s trade deficit and the CBI estimate that taking a smarter green policy approach could boost the UK’s economy by almost £20 billion by 2014/15.

CASE STUDY

The Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation (ECCI) is housed in a £10.5 million refurbishment of an 18th Century Old Royal High School at the University of Edinburgh.

A collaboration with Heriot-Watt and Edinburgh Napier Universities, it comprises an innovation suite, lecture theatres, seminar rooms, and large atrium space ideal for exhibitions and networking events.

The successful combination of heritage and sustainability has created an environment that fosters innovation, joint working and bold forward thinking. ECCI is expected to be a self-sustaining centre, generating income via the building, skills and executive education programmes. It is already generating income in the wider economy through innovation project work to achieve a low carbon economy in Scotland.

ECCI’s current European Regional Development Fund Low Carbon Innovation project is predicted to generate £15 million turnover and 20 jobs for Scottish Small and Medium Enterprises by March 2015.

For more case studies please visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk
BUSINESS BENEFIT 5

Embracing sustainable technologies allows you even greater potential, not only to generate new and renewable energies, but to provide a resource which can both generate research income, and enhance the student learning experience.

The new Research Excellence Framework (REF) includes an explicit assessment of the impact that research has had on society, the economy, culture, the environment, health and quality of life. The REF therefore incentivises institutions to demonstrate the impact of their research, including towards sustainable development.

CASE STUDY

The Future Factory at Nottingham Trent University uses a range of academic/research staff, students, graduate placements and specialist product design and prototyping technologies to help SME business develop the next generation of more efficient, functional and sustainable products.

The Future Factory is a six year, £4 million sustainable design in business support project, aiming to deliver 279 business assistances, 200 business collaborations, 257 graduate placements, 39 new jobs created and 30 business start-ups by 2015.

For more case studies please visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk

A question a Governor can ask:

Is your university ready to demonstrate the contribution its research has made to a sustainable future in its next REF?

CASE STUDY

The Institute of Sustainability Solutions Research (ISSR) at Plymouth University is the single point of contact for organisations wanting to collaborate with the University on sustainability.

The ISSR is focused on solutions-based research and outreach in sustainability. It has built an international reputation for impactful research that informs solutions critical to the environmental, social and economic dilemmas which are of relevance to business, government, civil society and the broader community.

With over 300 researchers, the ISSR connects individuals with specialist expertise, promotes dynamic cutting-edge collaboration and encourages students interested in sustainability to engage with relevant researchers.

48% of Plymouth University’s research income comes from environmental and sustainability research and an average of £4.4 million per annum is dedicated to environmental and sustainability research. Around 24% of the University’s academic publications per annum are related to sustainability.

For more case studies please visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk
BUSINESS BENEFIT 6

The growing commitment of employees to sustainability resilience and opportunity makes an employer’s reputation a key element in attracting and retaining talent. By 2020, 50% of the workforce will be made up of Generation Y employees, a generation that care about sustainability, who want to work for an employer that is responsible and innovative in its culture, style and approach and who have a reputation for good governance.

It can cost anywhere between 70-200% of an employee’s annual salary to recruit a new member of staff. When employees share your values, they are more committed to your organisation. Engaged staff members can give 15% more to their employer in terms of discretionary effort. What could this allow you to do?

DID YOU KNOW?

Approximately two-thirds of students would be willing to sacrifice £1000 from an average graduate starting salary to work for a company with a positive social and environmental record.

CASE STUDY

The Scottish Government produced a guide on Better Business and how to improve staff performance based on experiences from local authorities, support agencies and businesses. The Guide illustrates how staff engagement offers real benefits that are much broader than just carbon savings.

Innovating, building staff morale, cost-cutting, and being viewed as leading the pack on sustainability are just some of the key reasons to get involved. But perhaps the most important reason of all is that cutting carbon in a collective way makes great business sense – socially responsible business is something that staff, customers, suppliers, and other employers instinctively recognise and want to buy into.

Carbon emissions are driving climate change and are unsustainable, at current levels. Future generations are relying on us to do more to limit the damage these emissions are causing. Some employers are already doing a lot of good. But whatever your stage of development, you can join them and reap the benefits of engaging staff on low carbon activities.

For the full Guide please visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk
In November 2014, the Higher Education Academy, in collaboration with the National Union of Students, published their fourth paper into students’ attitudes towards, and skills for, sustainable development.7

Key findings from the study include:

- Over eight in every ten students consistently believe that sustainable development should be actively incorporated and promoted by universities.
- International students are significantly more likely to agree that action should be taken by universities in this way.
- Over two thirds of those surveyed consistently believe that sustainable development should be incorporated into all university courses.
- Over 60% of students want to learn more about sustainable development, rising to three quarters amongst international students.

The report summarised ‘In response to the clear student demand, we continue and reinforce our recommendations that all HEI’s adopt a holistic approach where students, senior management, academic staff, estates staff, employers and professional bodies work together on embedding Sustainable Development throughout all curriculum, extra-curricular, operational research and enterprise activities’

A question a Governor can ask:

What message does your institution portray to prospective students about its commitment to social, environmental and economic prosperity?

CASE STUDY

London School of Economics and Political Science’s (LSE) Sustainable Projects Fund included a rolling prize-fund to support student and staff-led projects to enhance sustainability within the LSE community.

Financed by a 10p ‘tax’ on each bottle of water sold at LSE catering outlets and proceeds from the ReLove scheme, which allows students to donate usable but unwanted items for re-sale, the 2010/11 fund yielded £17k and two completed student-led projects.

£7k was made available for a green roof, installed in spring 2012 and £3k for a beehive installed in spring 2012, promoting biodiversity and adding value to urban areas.

This project provides practical, visible improvements to the LSE campus, increases student and staff engagement and provides valuable experience and skills for students applying to and administering the Fund.

For more case studies please visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk
BUSINESS BENEFIT 8

Employability outcomes, as well as being of reputational importance, are increasingly a key driver in influencing student choice; anecdotal evidence suggests that students themselves are placing employment outcomes higher up the value chain when considering which degree to choose and where to study.

This is because a degree - once a passport to a graduate level career - is no longer sufficient in itself. Employers are now looking for ‘graduates plus’, in terms of more rounded employees, and are seeking to recruit those who are educated in sustainability matters, and can think and work creatively and flexibly. The UK has become the green financing capital of the World, with UK green business continuing to grow despite the economic downturn. Embedding sustainability across your curriculum will give your graduates the soft skills that employers want, increasing their employment potential.

It is not just the obvious professions where employers expect sustainability skills, such as architecture or surveying, but increasingly sustainability skills are a big part of a variety of sectors, including communications, marketing and project management.

CASE STUDY

In 2014, the University of Nottingham offered its first MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) called ‘Sustainability, Society and You’. With an agenda to support learning about, for and through sustainability, it developed an interactive course combining different disciplinary perspectives on sustainability with a range of practical tools to encourage behaviour change.

The University is not only teaching content, but teaching how to make use of content, developing critical thinkers and positive change agents. Both course team and learners have felt empowered to take the small steps that can significantly contribute towards sustainability.

The course has stimulated debates across continents and has also influenced its internal teaching enhancement by providing an exemplar of effective online learning.

The context of the MOOC is to ensure that University of Nottingham graduates get valuable insight and are better attuned to the big issues in the world of work into which they are entering.

For more case studies please visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk
BUSINESS BENEFIT 9

Partnerships can generate unanticipated sources of innovation which can enhance your long term ability to compete. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of your organisation and growing your reputation will lead to greater partnership potential. Partnerships also enrich your academic impact and advance the economic, cultural and social capital of your community.

In May 2013, Sir Andrew Witty was commissioned by Government to investigate how universities can drive growth in their areas for the benefit of the wider UK and to disseminate knowledge and best practice. His independent review (‘Encouraging a British Invention Revolution’) was published in October 2013 and detailed how universities have ‘extraordinary’ potential to enhance economic growth, creating jobs and more.

The Witty Review recommended that universities should be at the heart of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and that the full potential of universities should be released to support innovative local Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs).

CASE STUDY

The £16million University of Strathclyde Urban Energy Project is transformational – acting as a catalyst for collaborative low carbon heat network development with Further Education, Social Housing and Local Authority partners.

Operational savings of £4million per year support investments in energy efficiency and research into emerging energy supply and communications technology. As a ‘Smart City’ research platform, the Strathclyde campus provides training and research opportunities to students and the local community.

The Sustainable Facilities Training Centre provides local apprentices with ‘next generation’ technology experience, whilst the City Observatory provides researchers with over 200 data feeds to support research on smart grids, communications, energy, sociology, health and public policy.

For more case studies please visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk
BUSINESS BENEFIT 10

The role of the university is no longer seen as uniquely being an institution for the personal development of its students. Increasingly, there is an expectation on universities to engage with the local communities in which they exist and to help the socially-excluded to adapt to the demands of the knowledge economy. Universities that are engaged with businesses and the local community are vital in driving economic and social prosperity both for the region in which they sit and beyond.

CASE STUDY

Canterbury Christ Church University has been developing environmental perspectives, not only in conjunction with the local community, but also with partners overseas.

University staff contribute to the ‘Teach for Malaysia’ programme for ‘high flying’ postgraduates. This has resulted in a number of outstanding projects, including a study of the effects of palm oil and other effluents on local rivers.

This builds on the previous success of their new Teacher Education Programme for the Malaysian Ministry of Education, which attracted substantial funding.

For more case studies please visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk

A question a Governor can ask:
As a civic leader, how does your institution make the quality of life better in the community it serves?

CASE STUDY

The School Governor Initiative at the University of Manchester encourages and engages staff and former students to contribute to the improvement of state schools by becoming volunteer school governors. Working with SGOSS, a national charity whose role is to match prospective governors with schools, the University is contributing to the leadership and improvement of state schools by encouraging staff and alumni to take up vacancies where there is most need.

The initiative has been expanded to the vast pool of Manchester alumni, widening their success in filling vacancies across England.

In 2013/14, their network of staff and alumni school governors volunteered a total of 2,892 days, impacting on approximately 84,350 learners. The economic value of the contribution of University of Manchester staff was estimated to be more than £0.75million in 2012/13.

In 2013/14 the University topped SGOSS volunteer recruitment table and is now working with the Charity to support other universities in developing a similar initiative.

For more case studies please visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk
CONCLUSION AND CALL FOR ACTION

We hope that this guide has been both inspiring and thought provoking and has given you some ideas as to how you can help to build resilience into the future of your university.

As a university governor this guide seeks to inform and equip you to challenge the senior team and assure yourself that your institution builds sustainability resilience and opportunity. In this resource constrained environment, competitiveness, value for money and improved productivity will help deliver institutional success.

As stakeholders often perceive universities as ‘public or civic’ bodies, there is enormous opportunity to exercise thought leadership, setting the standard for others in how we choose to deal with the emerging societal issues of the day. Institutions in England and Wales with charitable status are expected to operate in the interests of public benefit; we must take account of the Charity Commissions guidance and be able to identify benefit(s) and ensure that such benefits are to the public or a section of the public; failure to ensure ‘high standards’ can result in adverse publicity and reputational risks.

While there is much to celebrate and some great work has already been done across the sector as evidenced here, there is still much more to do. We need to be agile and adapt to the changing requirements of a modern and complex world and ensure that our operations fulfil our function as a service to society and ensure our longevity. Operating for the public good is central to all that we do.

We are on a journey together in this territory and we hope that what you have read will encourage you to start out on yours or take your next bold step. There is a wealth of support out there to help your institution go from ‘good to great’; working together we can lead change to make the sector one that is renowned for being at the forefront of this agenda.

If you have any thoughts or comments on what you have read, please do get in touch, we would be happy to hear from you.

EAUC Board of Trustees
This guide has provided questions you can ask your executive but you will want to know that there is a robust mechanism to help your university drive this agenda across all aspects of its business.

In a partnership with sector leadership bodies the EAUC exists to support tertiary education in meeting the challenges and opportunities of today. We support executive teams, sustainability teams and students to take a strategic and systematic approach to economic, social and environmental issues.

We encourage you to consider using the LiFE Tool. Learning in Future Environments – LiFE – is a powerful strategic tool to help university leadership teams to design, plan and deliver your strategic sustainability activities. LiFE helps you build coherence and synergies across all university operations, ensuring your institutional approach is beneficial at all levels. In addition it can be used as a gap analysis tool in your current provision, measure your impact and demonstrate progress. Along with external accreditation, you can enhance your brand and get recognition for the valuable work you do.

Your next step is to get your executive team using LiFE.

For an introduction to LiFE, which is free for EAUC Members, please contact life@eauc.org.uk

If you feel your executive team are well on their journey then get the recognition they deserve and nominate them for a Green Gown Leadership Award. Find out more at www.greengownawards.org.uk
1. The Innovation Bottom Line: How companies that see sustainability as both a necessity and an opportunity, and change their business models in response, are finding success (2012). MIT Sloan Management Review and The Boston Consulting Group


3. Shaping Agendas in HE – The impact of potential changing energy, emissions and adaptation drivers through the 2020’s (2014) ARUP

4. Department of Energy and Climate Change – Estimated impacts of energy and climate change policies on energy prices and bills (2013)


7. Higher Education Academy – Student attitudes towards and skills for sustainable development (2014) [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/node/10189](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/node/10189)

FURTHER READING AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

**General**
Sustainable Development in UK Government


**Higher Education**
Implementing The Future We Want, The UK Manifesto - for dialogue, collaboration and action Post Rio+20 December 2013 http://www.eauc.org.uk/giving_eauc_members_a_powerful_international_vo

The Sustainability Exchange. Free Gateway to the combined knowledge, guidance and support of all Tertiary Education http://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/

The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC) http://www.eauc.org.uk/home

Universities UK – Efficiency, effectiveness and value for money http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2015/EfficiencyEffectivenessValueForMoney.pdf


The Higher Education Funding Council for England http://www.hefce.ac.uk/workprovide/Framework/

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/about_us/internal_policies/sustainability.aspx

The Scottish Funding Council http://www.sfc.ac.uk/guidance/GovernanceGuidance/Governanceguidance.aspx

The Leadership Foundation http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/

**Green Skills and Employment**
Student attitudes towards and skills for sustainable development https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/node/10189


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Developed and administered by the EAUC, the Sustainability Exchange aims to be the world’s leading resource of sustainability information.

www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk