



# Case study: University of Essex

## **Environmental audit and carbon strategy**

*The University of Essex is a UK teaching university with 11,000 students, including 3000 postgraduates. As a HEFCE funded institution, the University was required to develop a carbon management plan to cover its operations.*

*The University approached Brite Green to review the University's environmental performance and design a carbon management plan to deliver stretching carbon reductions in the most cost effective way.*

### **Implementing a comprehensive carbon management plan**

HEFCE, the funding body for tertiary education in England, required Universities to develop carbon management plans to help meet the sector's targets which were set as part of the Climate Change Act 2008.

The University of Essex sought support from Brite Green to carry out a comprehensive review of environmental management at their campuses in Colchester, Loughton and Southend, and develop a reduction strategy based on the most effective reduction solutions.

The project had four focus areas:

- Identifying the commercial drivers for improved environmental management
- Undertaking environmental audits of the University sites
- Develop a carbon management plan, and
- Set out a roadmap to achieve ISO 14001:2004 certification

### **Identifying commercial drivers for environmental management**

Brite Green set out the case for environmental management at the University, identified a number of drivers to implement robust environmental and carbon management practices. Funding from HEFCE and legislative compliance costs from the CRC meant that carbon performance had a significant direct financial impact. Scrutiny from key University stakeholders, including students and NGOs such as the Green League also made environmental performance a key reputational issue for vice-chancellors.

### **Environmental audit**

Brite Green conducted a detailed audit to identify and quantify the University's key environmental aspects and impacts. The review covered all University departments and operations and assessed energy and carbon, waste, water and sewage, emissions and discharges, transport and travel, and biodiversity. Procurement, construction and refurbishment practices were also reviewed with regards to their impact on environmental performance.

### **Carbon Management Plan**

To meet the HEFCE requirements, Brite Green worked with the Estates Director to develop a carbon reduction target for 2020, based around the most cost effective reduction solutions available to the University.

The energy and carbon footprint of the organisation was calculated, including a baseline and historical trends. Essex' performance was benchmarked against other Universities and a "business as usual" projection of future energy usage was developed based on the University's commercial and property strategy.

A range of carbon reduction options were analysed to determine the total reduction opportunity and the cost per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>e reduced. Based on the marginal abatement costs, a programme of carbon reduction investments and systems were chosen and short-, medium-, and long-term carbon target reduction targets were agreed and a detailed reduction plan submitted to HEFCE.

### **Roadmap to achieving ISO 14001:2004**

The University wanted to develop an environmental management system and asked Brite Green to determine which was most appropriate to their needs. ISO 14001:2004 was selected and a road map to achieving certification was outlined for the University.

### **Find out more**

To find out more about how Brite Green can help you to assess your environmental performance or develop a targeted sustainability improvement programme, please [contact us](#).

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