



Universities that Count

End of Year Report

Year 1: June 2008 - July 2009

Purpose

To provide the four UK higher education funding councils - Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI) and Scottish Funding Council (SFC) - with an end of year report on Universities that Count (UTC).

UTC is managed by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC), providing financial management, governance and reporting as well as using the EAUC network for marketing, recruitment, PR and communications with partner institutions. The project has 3 project partners:

1. CSR Consultancy Ltd as lead Delivery Partner;
2. Business in the Community (BITC) provides the index software, project governance/advice, training for UTC reviewers, IT support and independent assurance through Arthur D. Little; and
3. University of Gloucestershire provides overarching financial management, administration and governance of the project on behalf of HEFCE.

Year 1 of the UTC programme ran from June 2008 to July 2009. Activity during the first eight months were reported on in the Mid-Term Report submitted in January 2009. Therefore this report will focus mainly on activities from February 2009 – July 2009 although the budget will show figures for the full annual cycle.

Introduction & Background

UTC has had a successful first year, establishing itself as the first independent, quality assured corporate responsibility benchmarking initiative designed specifically for higher education institutions. 56 institutions (including 14 members of the Russell Group) and HEFCE took part in the initiative. 25 completed the full Corporate Responsibility Index, while a further 31 completed the more specific Environment Index. The initial aim was for 40 institutions to participate so the target for Year 1 has been exceeded.

All participants have received their detailed individual feedback reports, which enable them to compare their performance against their peers and that of the business community and gives them a ranking within the sector. Participant feedback received so far is positive and indicates that many institutions intend to take part next year, with some Environment Index participants considering stepping up to the broader corporate responsibility index next year.

The main focus for UTC moving into Year 2 will be to improve the indices, making them more relevant to the sector. Recruitment for UTC 2010 begins in September with completion of the online questionnaire starting on 30 November 2010.



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In a Partnership with 

Objectives

Financial and Project Management

The EAUC is responsible for all financial aspects of the project, including invoicing partner institutions and distributing funds to the delivery partners as work is undertaken. It is also responsible for the long term strategic direction and overview of UTC, in consultation with the project partners, and for ensuring the successful delivery of UTC to time and within budget.

The financial commitment of the funding councils will reduce in year 2 as per the conditions of grant. As such new participants will be charged £1,000 + VAT and returning participants £1,250 + VAT, representing an increase of £250 and £500 respectively. Participants will be charged the same irrespective of which index they complete.

Programme Marketing & Communications

The main objective for EAUC in the last 6 months has been to ensure all participants and the wider EAUC network have been informed of developments within UTC. This has included dissemination of information on UTC via the EAUC website, the EAUC monthly e-news and quarterly *Earth* magazine, to encourage and recruit institutions to participate, and complete the Index. Once signed up, institutions were passed across to CSR Consultancy Ltd to complete the process.

On 23 June 2009, EAUC organised a UTC workshop at the Green Gown Awards event at Imperial College London. Over 60 people attended the event, the aim of which was to review the Index for current participants, look at emerging results and themes, respond to feedback from existing participants and look at ways to improve the index for Year 2. CSR consultancy delivered the workshop. Other events are planned for the autumn for Year 2 recruitment.

As UTC has developed, various articles for the media have also been published, including a CSR article in Sustain Magazine in July, as well as a sector wide press release on 18 June 2009. Further media communications are planned for the autumn with the publication of the end of year 1 report and recruitment for year 2.

Participant Support

At the start of this reporting period (February 09), participants had 2 months remaining to complete their responses to the online questionnaire. CSR Consultancy dealt with a stream of email and telephone queries from participants seeking clarification of questions and the evidence required to support answers. These exchanges allowed the team to judge who was proceeding well with the work, who was struggling and who had not yet started.

Submission Reviews

The deadline for completion of the online questionnaire was 31 March 2009. A team of 6 reviewers from CSR Consultancy then concentrated on the very large task of reviewing the online questionnaires and following up institutions that were late with their submissions. A number of staff changes and holiday commitments caused understandable delays at some institutions.

Each submission was subject to a First Review to ensure the evidence submitted supported the scores in the online form. A Second Review then verified the work of the First Reviewers, moderating the First Review results and ensuring consistency in the scores and level of evidence required to justify them. A final Review Report was then produced and sent to the relevant university or college.



The next stage involved a visit or telephone interview to collect the answers to the Review Report and “Close Out”, i.e. producing a final submission with no outstanding points and therefore a final score for the participating institution. 12 visits were carried out in late May and early June 09 covering (in order of visiting):

- University of Exeter
- University of Plymouth
- University of Aberdeen
- University of St Andrews
- University of Edinburgh (including a stakeholder meeting with various Scottish participants)
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- University of Bradford
- Leeds University
- Swansea Metropolitan University
- University of Glamorgan
- London School of Economics & Political Science
- University of Westminster

The remainder of June and July was taken up with email and telephone-based reviews of submissions and follow-ups, with participants being allowed time to collect the additional evidence required to support their answers.

Individual Feedback Reports

Once all the reviews were complete, the BITC Online Survey System was updated with the reviewed results and the individual feedback reports for each institution were produced, giving detailed feedback against each criteria and providing a ranking within the sector for comparison against peers as well as the business community. Institutions are able to see clearly the areas they have excelled in and those that need improvement. These reports were emailed to each institution’s lead practitioner, and printed copies were also sent to the Vice-Chancellor / Principal.

A number of follow-up events are planned, including a 1 day EAUC training event entitled *Corporate Social Responsibility – Gaining Strategic Control & Establishing Consistent Leadership* at the University of Leicester on 14 October 2009. CSR Consultancy will be part of the delivery team at each training and recruitment event.

End of Year Sector Report

A UTC end of year sector report will be distributed by the end of September, and will be a useful tool in recruiting for 2010, which has already started. The report will focus on results, highlighting areas of best practice especially from the top performers. The University of Brighton has signed up late and is completing the UTC CR Index “off-timetable”. Also as previously stated the vast majority of existing participants who have replied have confirmed that they will take part next year. A presentation on UTC will be given at the Association of Heads of University Administration conference at Loughborough in September.

Project Development

Although the period of this report has been largely focussed on managing the process of the 2008/09 Index submissions, some project development work has taken place. As mentioned above, a



workshop for participants was held on June 23rd, the day of the Green Gown Awards, at Imperial College London, where participants gave valuable feedback on improvements that could be made to the process. This was followed up with the distribution of a questionnaire to all participants via email. To date more than 30 responses have been received with many suggestions for improving the Index process and the way that HEIs approach the task. All of this feedback will be considered in improving the Index surveys and supporting guidance notes before UTC 2010 starts.

In addition to the mechanics of the process, a major area for development is the refinement of the Index to incorporate teaching, learning and research, and the development of questions which focus on the efforts HEIs make to incorporate Education for Sustainable Development into their activities. Regarded by many as the most important CR/Sustainability impact of higher education, there is much potential for developing the Index in this area and an academic stakeholders group, chaired by Prof. Jan Bebbington of the University of St. Andrews and Chair of the Sustainable Development Commission Scotland, is being established to consider these issues. A number of other consultation workshops will also take part in October 2009 to capture the views of practitioners and senior management/Vice Chancellors (see below) to ensure the UTC index reflects the needs and concerns of the sector in all areas. Information about these workshops will be made available shortly and we appreciate all anticipated input. A date for the vice chancellor meeting has been set as 5th November 2009 in London.

Progress against Tasks and Objectives

Task – EAUC	Progress
Financial Management	Financial and reporting authority to ensure the project is running on time and to budget. All participants that have signed up have been invoiced and project is running on budget. A new payment structure for Year 2 has been finalised and a sign up form for participation created.
Marketing and PR	Completed. Issued press release to sector on 18 June to communicate emerging Year 1 results. Included articles in various media publications such as <i>Earth</i> , <i>Sustain</i> magazine etc. Provided regular update reports to the sector via e-news, website etc
Feedback Reports	VC's contacted with end of year reports at beginning of August for each institution
Project Management	Management infrastructure in place. Review of Year 1 processes and look forward to Year 2.
Task – CSR Consultancy Ltd	Progress
Participant Support	Feb/Mar 09 – Email & telephone support as participants completed Indexes
1 st & 2 nd Reviews	Apr/May/Jun – 1 st Reviews of all 56 HEIs: Jun/Jul - 2nd Reviews of all 56
Feedback Reports	Completed in July & emailed / posted to HEIs
BITC	Progress
Strategic Advice	Monthly telephone calls held with CSR Consulting to support thinking around emerging issues and to address any issues of strategy.
Revisions to CR Index	Changes to main index, its scoring and guidance were communicated in a timely manner to ensure project met its key milestones.
IT Developments and Advice	Underlying programming changes implemented on time to meet projects key milestones; external programmer utilised on technical issues/problems and



Index Training done so within existing IT budget constraints.
Core UTC staff trained in applying the methodology and in generating feedback reports for individual Universities – all done within planning timings which supported hitting project timeframe.

University of Gloucestershire

Progress

Financial Management Completed. Financial management and governance for the project to ensure its running on track for HEFCE.

Achievements against Targets

Targets	Achievements to date	Comments
To ensure participants and sector kept up to date with programme developments	Regular communications via media and EAUC network. 1 day feedback and looking forward workshop on 23 June in London. A number of proposed events for the autumn of 2009.	Over 60 attended the workshop. Recruitment is currently ongoing for other workshops.
40 UTC participants	56 took part	5 from Scotland, 3 from Wales, 1 from Northern Ireland and 47 from England
Visit 20% of participants Independent assurance to check 20% of submissions and their processing	12 HEIs visited Arthur D. Little auditor has reviewed 2 complete submission processes for each of the 6 reviewers	Target achieved No significant issues arose but guidance given on document control and record keeping.

Areas for Development

Tasks	Comments	Timescale
Improve Index process to ensure the needs of the sector are reflected	Feedback has been received from participants and this will be used to develop the Index process and guidance notes	By end of November 2009
Teaching/Learning/Research question guidance & development	Academic stakeholder group to meet to advise. Also other consultation groups - practitioner group and Vice Chancellors'	By end of November 2009. Vice Chancellor meeting arranged for 5 November 2009.
Recruiting for 2009/10 – Year 1 sector report	The submission of feedback reports to institutions was delayed, and so the sector feedback report will now be issued at the end of September 2009. This is needed to help with year 2 recruitment.	By the end of September 2009



Project budget – Year 1 (June 2008 – July 2009)

Activity	Budget	Actual Spend	Project Year End	Variance
BITC - License Agreement and Project Support	31,500	28,500	28,500	3,000
EAUC - Programme Supervision, High level management and communications	31,700	29,500	31,700	0.00
CSR Consulting – Index Development and Management	58,190.50	53,690	58,190.50	0.00
Arthur D Little – Quality Assurance	12,700	10,130.80	10,130.80	2,369.20
University of Gloucestershire –Programme Administration	3,000	3,000	3,000	0.00
Material Costs	5,000	826.98	826.98	4,173.00
Travel Costs	7,500	4,595.86	5,095.86	2,404.14
TOTAL	149,590.50	130,243.64	137,444.14	11,946.34

There are a small number of invoices still awaiting payment, please refer to project year end for final spend for year 1. The year 1 sector report will now be published in September 2009, taking this into year 2. This has an impact on year 1 budget for CSR Consultancy (£4,500) and EAUC (£2,000). These amounts will be paid in year 2, but money has been ring fenced from the year 1 budget. Also the amount of T&S still to be paid to project partners is unknown until invoice received, thus a contingency of £500 has been projected for year end. The variance will be ring fenced for the UTC budget to provide any contingency for future years to ensure the programme is financially sustainable.

Conclusion

The project partners are very pleased with the response to Year 1 of UTC, which included a significant over-achievement of the target for participant numbers and very positive feedback from participants when they received their individual feedback reports. A number have asked for more detailed insight, which is being provided by CSR Consultancy, and one participant is using its UTC results as a framework for strategic planning and review. The EAUC is also developing a support package for existing participants which will include workshops/events and ongoing consultancy support. This is being developed separately from the current UTC budget. A number of CSR events have been planned for the autumn which will have a significant focus on UTC as the benchmarking tool for the sector.

A key lesson for Year 2 for CSR Consultancy is that HEI participants require a greater level of individual support and guidance than corporate participants in the BITC business index. This has meant more input and clarification during the review process (and therefore a longer review process than planned) to ensure a level playing field for all participants, whether experienced in CSR or not. HEIs tend to underscore themselves and must be guided away from this, in addition to the more conventional process of asking for additional evidence to support a high self-completion score.





The other key lesson is that there is widespread support for a more developed set of questions focussing specifically on Teaching, Learning and Research. There is growing agreement that this is the most important impact of HEIs. A set of 'pilot' questions was included in Year 1 of UTC, and these will be developed further for Year 2 to ensure that the UTC programme accurately reflects the purpose of the sector. Institution feedback will also be taken into account when updating the UTC guidance notes.

UTC is operating within budget and most timescales have been achieved. The only significant delay has been the end of year Sector Report which was originally due out in July but will now be published at the end of September 2009. The next funding council report will be the Year 2 mid-year progress report, which is the end of January 2010. At this time recruitment will be complete and participants will be completing the Year 2 Index. The Year 2 Index and guidance notes will also be updated, based on the feedback from participants and key sector organisations and institutions.

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