

ISO14001 Revision Standards Workshop

On the 6th of November Martin Baxter, Chief Policy Advisor at IEMA, presented a workshop on the new ISO14001:2015 standard at Oxford Brookes University.

The notes below complement the slides that were discussed during the workshop and aim to capture the key points raised by representatives from across the tertiary education sector in response to the revisions.

The standard has 14 areas which have been revised.

Key area of change

Strategic Context (slide 4)

- Historically the standard has been used by organisations as a tool to manage their impact on the environment. The revisions mean that organisations now need to consider both the internal and external environment by considering not just what impact the organisation has on the environment but how the environment interacts with the organisation. Examples of an external focus provided included the impacts of climate change, heat waves, floods, changes to regulations and understanding of regulatory context.
- The revisions also introduce a requirement to consider the needs and expectations of interested parties. These may include regulators, NUS, PnP, HEFEC (Office for Students), community members, councils etc. who have an interest in the EMS.
- The revised standard includes compliance obligations which consist of legal requirements that an organisation has to comply with and other requirements that an organisation has to or chooses to comply with, such as Fairtrade Status, industry codes of practice etc. It is, therefore, important that organisations do not sign up to standards that they cannot deliver on.
- Some examples of aspects with specific reference to HE and FE institutions that could fall under the strategic context area of the revisions:
 - The consideration of students as customers
 - EU referendum
 - Changes in funding
 - Negative environmental messages from the government
 - Changes to education through college partnerships
 - Growth in UK population
 - NUS surveys on Sustainability in Universities and Sustainability in Curriculum

Scope (slide 5)

- Under the revisions of the new standard, organisations will set the scope of their EMS and will determine how they will implement the requirements of the system. The scope of the EMS then has to be defensible and publically available.
- Organisations need to consider the strategic context of their EMS.



- Organisations have to include all elements that they control or influence in the EMS and cannot omit aspects that are within their boundaries from the EMS e.g. procurement activity or any other activity they can control or influence. However, organisations do have the freedom to decide whether an area can be directly controlled or just influenced e.g. it may only be possible to influence, rather than control, the carbon emissions of tenanted properties.
- The revised standard needs to apply to the organisation as a whole. An 'organisation' is defined as having the same management structure and this point prompted some debate among event attendees as they questioned whether one department e.g. the estates department can be certified to the new ISO 14001 standard or if the whole institution would need to be certified.
- The finer points of this clause would need to be discussed with auditors. For example, taking a 'whole-institution approach' means that separate university/college sites or on-going building works cannot be excluded from the EMS.

Leadership and Top Management (slide 6)

- Under the new requirements, leaders and top managers must be accountable for the effectiveness of the EMS.
- Under the revisions, organisations can no longer have a key Management Representative - all managers are representatives. In the context of building this requirement into HE and FE institutions, discussion indicated that the VC/Principal and other key staff would have to see the management review of the EMS, but the initial review could be carried out in other governance committees.
- Although responsibility for achieving certain activities can be delegated, accountability for ensuring that targets are achieved cannot be.
- This revision means that communications about the importance of the EMS, the integration of the EMS into the business process, continual improvement and ensuring resources are in place must come from top-level managers.
- In this section HR is referenced as a department which needs to be aligned with the EMS. This is because HR is responsible for determining/assessing an individual's competency to carry out work.

Policy Commitments (slide 7)

- This revision requires that organisations consider how their EMS intervenes to ensure that they strive for better environmental performance.

Actions to Address Risks and Opportunities (slides 8-10)

- Risks and opportunities are defined as "potential adverse effects (threats) and potential beneficial effects (opportunities)."
- In this context, organisations should also consider the opportunities into analysis of environmental impacts.



- Many universities and colleges are considering how this revision can be embedded into the corporate risk register.

Environmental objectives (slide 11)

No significant notes.

Competence and Awareness (slide 11)

- In order to meet this requirement, there is a need to ensure that universities and colleges have the appropriate training. Some institutions may need to develop programmes on competence and awareness.

Communication (slide 12)

- There is a requirement for communication to be reliable and consistent with information generated within the EMS.
- This revision places an increasing importance on the quality of the data for CRC, HESA equivalent data returns in future etc.

Operational Planning and Control (slide 13)

- Sustainability Procurement is an issue that needs to be considered under this requirement.
- A realistic understanding of what impact can be had by activities also needs to be considered e.g. what resources can be put in to get what results out.
- A matter of appropriate levels of influence.
- Defra priorities tool for prioritisation for suppliers e.g. a risk assessment.

Evaluation of compliance (slide 14)

- Organisations need to look at the status of their legal compliance. They should review the process for identifying their obligations and how they apply.

Management review (slide 14)

- Involvement is required to review performance and changes in context and provide guidance to the whole organisation. The ISO 14004 standard can provide guidance on this.

Continual Improvement (slide 15)

No significant notes

