

Case Study

Work Placement – Carbon Accounting for Travel Data – setting the baseline data for carbon neutral planning

Key Points

- This Real World project allowed students to apply for one of five work placement teams based with the Sustainability Engagement Manager and Energy & Environment Engineer.
- Issues of sustainability are positioned with constraints and difficulties that the students would need to overcome, illustrating to the students the context within which sustainability has to practice.
- The need for scrutiny, in addition to economic and environmental considerations, when providing generalised sustainability advice within the context of Cardiff Met sites was explored.
- 51 fields of data to be collected, calculated and provision of a full audit trail.

Who?

The Real World work placement, a level 5, for BA Business and Management students. The projects were designed for students on the Sustainability, Marketing and Finance pathways, with the opportunity to conduct research, analyse the issues identified and provide realistic solutions with the potential to directly influence sustainability initiatives on Campus. This group were tasked with the collection, sorting, conversion and audit trail of data for the HESA/EMR data return for 2019/20 to a deadline of April 2021.

Why?

Cardiff Metropolitan University recognises the importance of the role it has to play in environmental management of its estate and in promoting principles of sustainability across all activities, including teaching and research. The University manages and controls its environmental risks in a sustainable manner by complying with relevant legislation and adopting where appropriate best practice. Cardiff Metropolitan recognises a wide definition of sustainability, based on engaging in development that meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The University is continuously looking at how it can improve sustainability and reduce its carbon footprint, the placement gave student groups the opportunity to work collaboratively (virtual / online) on a range of projects within the sustainability field in relation to surroundings they were familiar with. Data capture for Travel have proved difficult in locating in previous years, this work placement group requiring the information assisted the locating and reviewing for future years.

How?

After applying for a position in their chosen subject, six students completed research on internal data collation and reporting to an external deadline of April 2021. Due to Covid-19 the eight week work placement was completed on Microsoft Teams, with weekly / regular meetings demonstrating ideas and progress on tasks allocated. The final element of the placement was to present group findings with an oral presentation and short report.

Key Points

- Authentic, learner centred, project based pedagogies prompted direct student engagement with a range of real world sustainability issues faced by Cardiff Met and its students.
- Students worked with actual clients and target user groups to create real solutions to real issues that are being taken forward and implemented by the institution.

Learning Outcomes

"Working on a real-world project has provided me with insight, perspective, and has helped me learn how to work as part of a team. I valued having our line manager and I realised that having a good relationship with your mentor is key to a healthy work environment. I learnt that sustainability is more than just recycling and using paper straws. It is actually about creating an impact so great that our future generations get to experience a healthy and sustainable world. Sustainability shouldn't be something you do from time to time, sustainability should be a life-style."
Loay Al Shuaili

February 2021 – May 2021

Outcomes

The Real World Project encouraged students to consider the role they and their discipline can play in prompting and influencing meaningful sustainability data collection. By developing and promoting real world solutions to genuine problems that had the potential for implementation and thus achieve a lasting impact, it was clear that the vast majority of students became invested in their project outputs and accordingly developed a strong sense of ownership and value in their accuracy of data collection and recording – evidence of effective experiential learning.

