

# ECO CAMPUS PLATINUM AND BEYOND


The University of Worcester has doubled in size in terms of student numbers and its estate is now spread across three campuses. As well as being a great achievement, this rapid rate of growth presents the sustainability department with many challenges.

Working with EcoCampus and NQA, Worcester University has more than overcome these challenges. It was the first university in England to be awarded EcoCampus 'platinum' status back in 2010 and now has become the second university in the UK to be successfully certified to the revised ISO14001:2015 standard, thus fitting the strategic plan of the University which states environmental sustainability as one of its core university values.



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**“The students are also very proud of our achievements and they truly appreciate what we have done. ”**

**“From the outset we enjoyed working with NQA.**

**Speaking with the expert auditors has allowed us to make sure that we are on the right track and it is always good to have our hard work recognised.”**

**Based in the city of Worcester, the university has around 10,000 students, 1,000 employees and an estate of around 76,000m<sup>2</sup>. The University has expanded from one single site to three major sites: an edge of city centre campus, a riverside campus and City Centre Campus - new buildings and historical ex-hospital. It also has a long-term development site called University Park.**

Worcester University joined the Eco Campus in 2007. Eco Campus is the leading Environmental Management System (EMS) and award scheme for the higher and further education sector. The university has had tremendous success for over a three year period to reach it's goal of achieving platinum status.

### **Why EMS?**

Katy Boom, Director of Environmental Sustainability said: “It was obvious to me, that as an organisation we would benefit from having a structured approach to managing our environmental impact. We didn't have much data or information so were at the very start of the journey. The attraction was that EcoCampus would provide us with a dedicated system enabling us to effectively manage our environmental performance.”

A key motive for Worcester to achieve the ISO14001:2015 standard was its opportunity to be recognised as an organisation demonstrating strong senior management support and the incorporation of environmental performance across daily governance, management and operational processes. Senior management actively champion the EMS, from attendance at the Sustainability Committee, to involvement with linking environmental aspects to strategic direction!

### **Bringing Everyone Together**

The journey towards EcoCampus and ISO14001 certification created a common goal that brought the entire university together. Boom commented: “It allowed the university to be integrated; the job of environmental management and sustainability is built into every department and every job description rather than being one person's responsibility.

“It was a slow and phased process but this was a great advantage. By the end, the concept of sustainability and environmental management was built into the psyche of all of the staff. The momentum grew organically and everyone was given enough time to contribute and take some ownership of the project.

“The students are also very proud of our achievements and they truly appreciate what we have done. Research has shown that students want to learn about the environment and sustainability and this process has certainly helped.”

### **Structured Approach**

Environmental management can often be daunting and confusing, but Boom explained that EcoCampus and the certification process helps make it all much more manageable: “The framework set up by EcoCampus helps give structure to all of our environmental work. It is so very easy to get lost and confused but having a clear framework makes it much easier, less confusing and daunting.”

### **Change Can Be Difficult**

Assisting in their transition to ISO14001:2015, EcoCampus and NQA provided training sessions, webinars, one-to-one support and the provision of document and process templates.

### **Outstanding Performance**

Recently the University opened a new integrated learning facility, The Hive. This is the UK's first joint university and public library and was financed by the university and Worcestershire County Council. On completion the university successfully integrated its environmental management system into the operational procedures. This will help with keeping the building operating effectively and with reduced environmental impacts. An Energy Manager role commencing shortly will assist with the evaluation of cost savings and identification for future continual improvement.

### **Expert Value**

Worcester place high value on their certification audits with NQA. Boom said: “From the outset we enjoyed working with NQA. Their expert auditors have detailed knowledge and experience and have proven to be an invaluable resource for continual improvement.”



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