

Employable Graduates for Responsible Employers

Research on the links between sustainability and employability in the graduate job market in relation to higher education teaching and learning



Report to the Higher Education Academy

Adam Cade, StudentForce for Sustainability

February 2008



The rise and rise of the ethical graduate jobseekers and recruiters

Contents

Section	Page
Summary	3
1 Research Focus	5
2 Policy Context	5
3 Stakeholders and Drivers	6
4 Terms	7
5 Methodology	8
6 Limitations	10
7 Findings	10
Students/graduates	10
Employers	15
University careers staff	19
Indicators of responsible practice	21
Sustainability competencies	22
8 Commentary	23
9 Recommendations	25
10 Appendices	29
Students/graduates questionnaire & results	29
Employers questionnaire & results	33
Careers staff questionnaire & results	37
11 Useful Resources	39

Summary

Aim

The research, commissioned by the Higher Education Academy, explored the links between sustainability and employability in the graduate job market in relation to higher education teaching and learning.

This was achieved in two ways – firstly, by researching the potential supply of graduate employees committed to careers with environmentally and socially responsible employers through identifying the needs and expectations of students and recent graduates; and secondly, by researching the graduate recruitment demands from employers committed to environmental and social responsibility through identifying their needs and expectations. Note: This research was commissioned in March 2006 and the first draft was completed in July 2007.

Method

3 main stakeholders – students/graduates, university career staff and employers

Online questionnaire surveys, structured interviews, focus groups, workshops

From June 2006 and February 2007

Findings

General

- The trend to more responsible employers is affecting the graduate job market and the demand for more particular competencies from recent graduate recruits.
- The graduate employability agenda is now closely linked to the employer sustainability agenda.
- There is mounting evidence and media coverage that students want to work for ethical employers who are environmentally and socially responsible.
- Many higher education institutions (HEIs) are responding to the challenges of education for sustainable development (ESD) through institutional changes in terms of the campus, curriculum and community, but not so much in terms of competencies or careers.

Students/graduates

- Differed in their responses in terms of gender, nationality, graduation year, and subjects studied.
- Mistrusted the claims of employers about their social and environmental responsibilities.
- Considered the social and environmental ethics of an employer before making a career choice.
- Are concerned about the preparation for their employment provided by universities and believed that sustainable development and corporate social responsibility (CSR) should be taught more at universities.
- Expected more of their future employers and their universities than of themselves, in terms of their social and environmental responsibility.
- Said that the social and environmental responsibility of the employer was not the main deciding factor, but a differentiating one in their choice of job.

Employers

- Considered the social/environmental ethics, values and experience of university students as part of their graduate recruitment.
- Said universities should do more to prepare students for working with employers who are socially and environmentally responsible.

- Provided specialist induction and training for graduate recruits on their social and environmental responsibilities.
- Needed graduate recruits with specific competencies to support their social and environmental responsibilities.
- Wanted more interdisciplinarity in universities as a way of teaching about social and environmental responsibility.

University career staff

- Requested information and guidance on the social and environmental reputation and performance of employers.
- Confirmed a growing trend for students and employers to consider the employer's social and environmental responsibility.
- Suggested that sustainability competencies should be more recognised in university teaching.
- Are becoming cynical about university statements of responsibility.
- Recognised the employer's needs for social and environmental responsibility.

Recommendations

Teaching at university

- Raise academic staff awareness about sustainable development and CSR
- Relate student and staff volunteering to academic learning
- Link universities and employers
- Link sustainable development and CSR on campus with teaching and learning
- Influence the educators for sustainable development
- Build on student behaviour

Advising students

- Raise awareness of careers staff about sustainable development and CSR
- Guide students/graduates
- Educate about careers as part of courses

Teaching competencies

- Match academic and work-related competencies
- Promote values education
- Promote citizenship alongside university teaching and learning as a key part of studentship

Comparing students

- Replicate this research related to specific subjects and employment sectors

Developing curricula

- Raise awareness about funding streams to market research employer and students needs and interests and develop new teaching and learning
- Explore new curriculum opportunities

Changing university culture

Enabling commitments

Research Focus

The Higher Education Academy and its Subject Centres, wishing to strengthen the links between education for sustainable development (ESD), employment and the career choices of graduates, commissioned research into career opportunities and how the career choices of graduates were being influenced by the sustainable development agenda. Additionally, they sought to explore the connections between ESD and employability.

The research primarily focused on evidence for how the career choices of graduates and the recruitment of employers was being influenced by the sustainable development agenda of employers. It also explored how ESD in higher education institutions (HEIs) matched the needs of socially and environmentally responsible employers.

Research Aim

The aims were to explore the links between sustainability and employability in the graduate job market in relation to higher education teaching and learning. This was achieved in two ways – firstly, by researching the potential supply of graduate employees committed to careers with environmentally and socially responsible employers through identifying the needs and expectations of students and recent graduates; and secondly, by researching the graduate recruitment demands from employers committed to environmental and social responsibility through identifying their needs and expectations.

Research Questions

The research attempted to answer certain key questions:

1. What is the evidence for any emerging demand from employers for environmentally-responsible graduate employees?
2. What is the evidence that students and recent graduates are making career choices that are influenced by environmental and social responsibility and selecting employers who have adopted responsible practices as well as policies?
3. Is the ethical stance of an employer a significant consideration for students and graduates when choosing potential employers?
4. Are employers looking to recruit graduates that have either an awareness of sustainability issues or particular competencies that may help the employer to progress their environmental and social responsibility?
5. Are there any gaps between the values, culture and competencies of new graduate recruits and the requirements of employers?
6. How far should the employability agenda in universities be influenced by the sustainable development agenda of employers and what are the challenges for higher education teaching, learning and career advice?
7. How can HEIs and their career services help match the supply of sustainably literate graduates with any demand from employers?

Policy Context

The main policy context for this research is based on the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) strategy on sustainable development which promotes a holistic approach to ESD, focusing on campus, curriculum and community (the 3Cs), and emphasising the need for all graduates to be 'sustainability literate'. The HEFCE strategy has given HEIs the green challenge to the 3Cs and this research links those to the employability agenda of HEIs by considering an additional 2Cs: careers and competencies.

Other recent policies and initiatives focusing on skills for employment have provided a basis for this research. This includes the Leitch Review (*Prosperity for All in the Global Economy: World Class Skills*), established to consider the UK's long-term skills needs, the Egan Report on Skills for Sustainable Communities, the work of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Academy, the DTI's interest in CSR, the development of Sector Skills Agreements by the Sector Skills

Councils and the increasing requirements for sustainability competencies by professional bodies.

The Leitch Review, amongst other reports and research, has highlighted that although 260,000 graduates enter the world of work each year, there is a strong likelihood that the UK will fall behind its competitors at degree level and above unless action is taken to ensure that universities produce the graduates that our economy needs, with the skills employers value.

Stakeholders and Drivers

Graduate employability

There are six key stakeholders in the employability of graduates, who are all influenced in various ways by government policies, either with a focus on the education, work experience or recruitment of graduates. The key drivers for graduate employability inevitably start with the skills needs of the employers. (See Figure 1 below.)

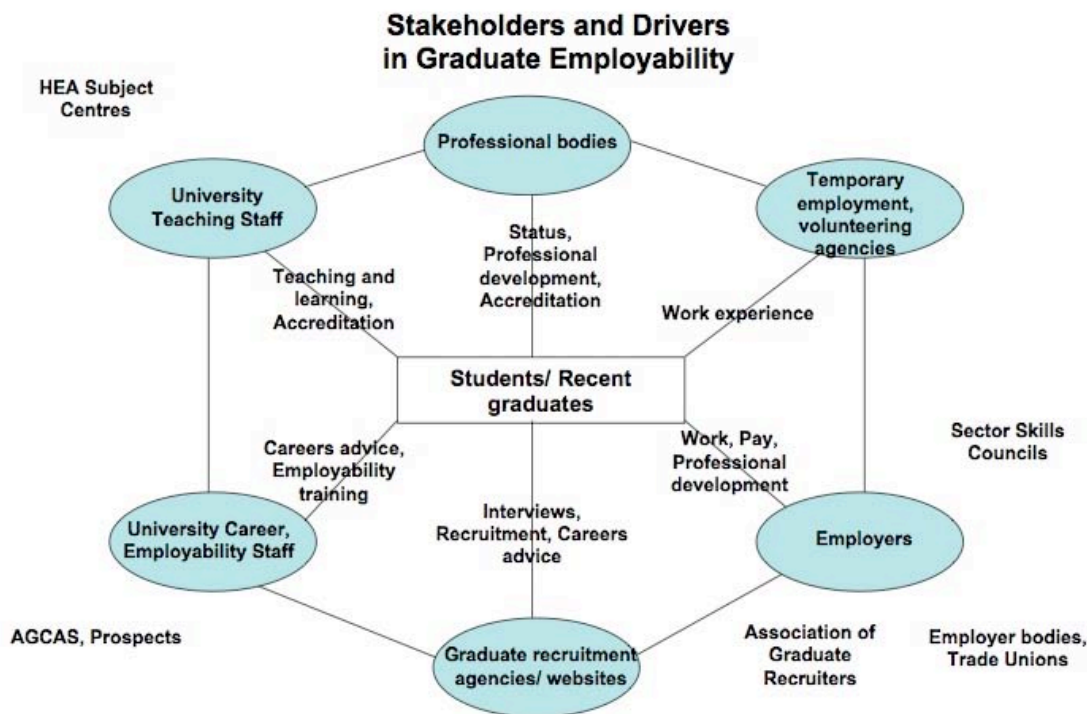


Figure 1

Stakeholders and drivers in employer responsibility

There are eight key stakeholders in the responsibility of employers that will be considered, again all of whom are influenced in various ways by government policies, either with a focus on the employment of staff and the workplace, the marketplace of products and services, the wider community locally and globally, and the environment. The key drivers for employer responsibility mainly start with the respect and motivation of the employees and potential recruits but also with issues around wider reputation, quality of processes, products and services and financial management. (See Figure 2 next page.)

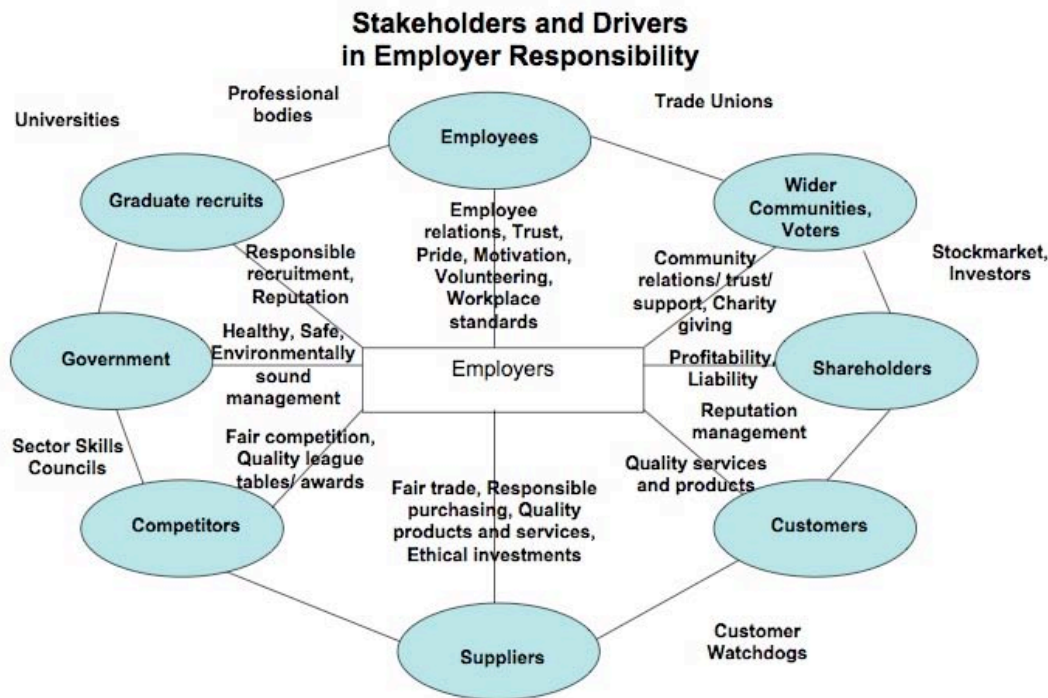


Figure 2

Terms

- Corporate social responsibility (CSR) – This is recognised by Business in the Community and the European Union as having four main elements: 1) Marketplace – employee volunteering that allows employees to learn about the marketplace, 2) Workplace – work-life balance that provides a happier workforce, 3) Community – good relations and dialogue with neighbouring and affected communities that improves public image and employee pride, 4) Environment – sound environmental management that reduces costs, avoids litigation and penalties, and improves image.
- Sustainable development – This research follows the term described by the Government and HEFCE.
- Social and environmental responsibility - Many students and employers did not fully understand the terms sustainable development and corporate social responsibility so we have mainly used the phrases environmental and social responsibility when discussing these issues.
- Students/graduates –Part-time and full-time higher education students on undergraduate or postgraduate courses, and recent graduates who have graduated in the last three years.
- Higher education institutions (HEIs) – Universities and colleges of higher education in the UK.
- Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) – 24 employer-based councils which identify the skills required by employers in different sectors and work in partnership with educators and trainers to develop these skills. They are supported and overseen by the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA).
- National Occupational Standards –The national standards being agreed, set and reviewed with employers and others to define the minimum competencies required for particular occupations.
- Sector Skills Agreements – All SSCs are currently developing agreements on the specific skills required by their employment sector, based on extensive mapping and analysis of skills needs.
- Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services (AGCAS) – The association representing and promoting HEI career advice and advisers.

- Higher Education Academy Subject Centres –24 Subject Centres, based in particular universities, which promote and develop good practice and policy for higher education teaching and learning in the UK.
- Professional bodies –Membership organisations representing particular professions, often establishing standards of admission and continuing professional development (CPD).
- Indicator of Responsible Studentship –An indication of the socially- and environmentally-responsible activities of students/graduates. Many of the activities are commonly used in public opinion polls.
- Voluntary sector –The not-for-profit sector which is governed by a voluntary board of directors or trustees.

Methodology

The research team was led by Adam Cade, Chief Executive of the educational charity StudentForce for Sustainability, which he co-founded with Professor Stephen Martin in 1996. Donna Druce provided valuable research assistance. The charity has provided paid placements related to sustainable development with a range of employers to over 1,000 university students and recent graduates. It has also provided specialist career advice and training to career advisers.

The research was triangulated by focusing on three main stakeholders – students/graduates, university career staff and employers. However it was supplemented by also consulting staff of the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres, Sector Skills Councils, professional bodies and other key stakeholders. The research used online questionnaires, structured interviews, focus groups, workshops, consultation with an advisory group and desk study. The research was carried out between June 2006 and February 2007.

Online questionnaire surveys

Questionnaires were used with the three main stakeholders using SNAP software.

Student/graduate questionnaire

A student/graduate questionnaire was advertised online by the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres, AGCAS, Graduate Prospects, Milkround, Doctorjob, and NUS Online, enabling an indirect circulation to over 100,000 students and recent graduates. The sample size of the questionnaire survey was about average for opinion polls (1,392 respondents).

A third of the sample had graduated over a year ago, a third had just graduated and a third were still students. Two thirds were female. Just over 80% were UK passport holders. The most common areas of study were:

Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance	19.1%
Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences	11.1%
Engineering	7.5%
Information and Computer Sciences	7.4%
Sociology, Anthropology and Politics	6.8%
Art, Design and Media	6.3%

The HEIs represented were English 81.9%, Scottish 9.3%, Welsh 8.4%, and Northern Irish 0.4%. The sample enabled a reasonable comparison between the four UK countries & non-UK, university types, gender, graduation year, employment sector preference, and career service users.

Employer questionnaire

An employer questionnaire was sent to over 1,000 human resource managers responsible for recruiting graduates, as well as specialist CSR or sustainable development managers and senior managers through professional bodies. A range of organisations were represented. The

sample size of employers for the questionnaire was small (87 respondents). The respondents were about two thirds businesses, a quarter public and educational bodies, and less than 10% voluntary or not-for-profit organisations.

Businesses with over 500 employees	45
Businesses with under 500 employees	15
Public bodies or education	20
Voluntary or not-for-profit organisations	7

University career staff questionnaire

A university career staff questionnaire was used at a workshop at Durham University for careers advisers. The sample was small (22 respondents from 18 universities in the North-East and Yorkshire/Humber regions and Scotland).

Structured interviews

Structured telephone interviews were conducted with 25 employers as a follow up to the employer questionnaire survey, and structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with 30 employers at three university career fairs (in London, Birmingham and Nottingham) in May and June 2006. Also as a supplement to the employer questionnaire survey, structured telephone interviews were conducted with staff of the 10 Sector Skills Councils (ConstructionSkills, Energy and Utility Skills, Financial Services Skills, LANTRA, Lifelong Learning UK, Proskills, SEMTA, SkillFast-UK, Skills for Care, and Summit Skills), the Sector Skills Development Agency, some professional bodies, Graduate Prospects, DoctorJob, the Association of Graduate Recruiters, Business in the Community, and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Structured telephone interviews were conducted with staff of 12 Higher Education Academy Subject Centres and the Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services (AGCAS), as a supplement to the university career staff questionnaire survey. Group discussions were also conducted with career advisers at two AGCAS workshops.

Careers advisers workshop

A day workshop for AGCAS members from the North-East and Yorkshire/Humber regions was organised to consult with a group of about 30 careers staff from 18 universities.

Student focus groups

Three focus groups were used to develop the questionnaires and gather quotations. They were conducted in May 2006 at De Montfort, Leeds and Cambridge Universities, each with a cross-section of 10 students, selected by the careers services as a result of being widely advertised.

Advisory group

An advisory group of experienced researchers and professionals involved with graduate employability and employer responsibility provided valuable guidance on the research aim and approach as well as the final report. They also helped to clarify the methodology, questions and means of distribution of the questionnaires. They included:

- Higher Education Academy – Simon Smith, Heather Witham and Stephen Sterling
- Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services – Rose Mortenson
- Association of Graduate Recruiters – Tracy Nolan
- Graduate Prospects – Charlie Ball, Sarah Kite
- Council for Industry and Higher Education – Bianca Kubler
- Universum AB – Heledd Poole
- National Union of Students Services Ltd – Jamie Agombar

- Arthur D Little – Justin Keeble, Head of Sustainability Services, UK
- Sustainability Ltd – Seb Beloe, Director of Research and Advocacy
- University of Leicester – Paul Jackson, Head of Employment Services

Desk study of related research

Lastly some desk study was used to provide some of the commentary. No references are given in this report. However it is planned that a fuller academic paper will be prepared in the near future, perhaps in collaboration with other researchers.

Limitations

There was only a small sample for the employer questionnaire. However this was supplemented with a range of other business support organisations, especially the Sector Skills Councils.

No senior staff representing employers were interviewed. It should be recognised that their views and longer-term strategic perspective are likely to be more positively in support of their social and environmental responsibilities. Further studies could interview senior managers to explore future trends or compare employer's policy with practice.

No university teaching staff were interviewed. However the HE Academy Subject Centres offered a useful insight into the views of academic staff. Further studies could explore the relationship between university career staff and academic staff in terms of education for employment and sustainable development.

No comprehensive desk study was completed to relate this research to other research, especially with regard to competencies, graduate recruitment practices, and student opinions. Other organisations such as Universum, Council for Industry and Higher Education, Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, National Union of Students, Forum for the Future, People and Planet and Global Campus Monitor have carried out related research.

Findings

Unless otherwise noted, all percentage figures use the strongest evidence from the questionnaire such as responses to “strongly agree”, “always”, “most”, and “very”.

Students/graduates

Percentage figures are from the student/graduate questionnaire survey. Quotations are from students during focus group discussions or from student/graduate comments in the questionnaire survey.

The research investigated a range of issues including the trust of employers, the influence of CSR and sustainable development on employment decisions, factors influencing impressions of employers, and reasons for choosing an employer.

Comparing students

Students/graduates showing the highest indication of socially- and environmentally-responsible studentship studied:

Education	58%
Built Environment	53%
Health Sciences and Practice	46%
Materials	45%
Social Policy and Social Work	43%
Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences	43%

Surprisingly the lowest indication came from Philosophical and Religious Studies (30%). The spreadsheet analysis of the most positive responses against the 24 Subject Centre categories, gender, nationality and graduation year is in the appendix.

A detailed comparison was made of the subject categories, represented by the 24 Higher Education Academy Subject Centres, the respondents who studied those subjects and their answers to the questionnaire. Some of these questions were designed to indicate the socially- and environmentally-responsible studentship (or graduateness) of these students/graduates. The average percentage of the most positive responses to the relevant questions (numbers five to 10) were used to develop an Indicator of Socially- and Environmentally-Responsible Studentship.

Female students/graduates (40%) appeared to show slightly more interest, awareness and need for environmental and social responsibility amongst prospective employers than male students/graduates (37%).

Non-UK passport holding students/recent graduates (43%) appeared to show slightly more interest, awareness and need for environmental and social responsibility amongst prospective employers than UK passport holding students/recent graduates (38%).

There was also a slight trend towards less evidence of social and environmental responsibility amongst students as they graduated (from 41% for students due to graduate in 2009 to 37% for graduates from 2004).

Comments included:

“Graduates are becoming more and more aware of the environmental and socio-economic issues that have become increasingly important with the issues of global warming and famine in less economically developed countries.”

Trusting employers

Many students/graduates mistrusted the claims of employers about their social and environmental responsibilities. Their views about employers claims were often sceptical and cynical.

Most student/recent graduate respondents agreed that employers should be relatively most responsible to employees (78%), closely followed by customers (68%), and then the environment (53%) and local community (49%). They agreed that employers should be relatively least responsible to shareholders (35%).

Respondents were asked to name employers as both the most and least respected in terms of their social and environmental ethics. Businesses were both the most respected and least respected sector. As one might expect, a larger proportion of businesses were least respected. The voluntary sector was the next most respected. Of named employers, the Cooperative Group (including the Cooperative Bank) was the most respected and McDonald’s was the least respected.

Employment Sector	% of students/ graduates who named as most respected employers	% of students/ graduates who named as least respected employers
Business	74%	96%
Voluntary	16%	1%
Public	7%	2%
Local government	2%	1%
Educational	1%	0%
Employer		
Cooperative Group	13%	McDonald's 16%
Body Shop	10%	Nestle 10%
Oxfam	4%	Shell 7%
Greenpeace	2%	Tesco 4%
BP	3%	BP 4%
Innocent Drinks	3%	Esso 3%

Universities were believed by students/graduates to practice and promote good social and environmental values more than employers do. About a third of students/graduates believed that “most employers practice and promote good social and environmental values”. However, a quarter did not have a view either way. Only a very small proportion of students/graduates (2%) strongly agreed. Most students/graduates (56%) thought that “most universities practice and promote good social and environmental values”.

Comments included:

“Attitudes towards more ethical practice are often poor with management and staff not being given appropriate training. They are not expected to care about these issues as keeping costs down is seen as more important.”

“A lot of companies do the talk but don't do the walk.”

“A lot of organisations may say they take their social and environmental responsibilities seriously but in reality they don't; profit appears to be more important.”

“Businesses are never squeaky clean – and won't be too thrilled about potential/current employees questioning them about it. Generally they just tick a few boxes in that direction to claim their environmental brownie points.”

“Promoting and practicing social and ethical responsibility are quite different issues. In my experience most companies are keen to promote the issues. However actual evidence of practicing them, or developing them to a higher level, is not so clear.”

“As for the employer responsibility, there is a large gap between what is written in mission statements and protocols and what is actually practiced. Unfortunately, I continue to find the predominant culture in private and some public organisations being skewed towards profit making, lacking concern for social and environmental responsibility and seriously breaching equal opportunity practices.”

“From my research, I have found that employers often try to appear to have corporate social responsibility in theory, but in practice it does either not exist, or exists to the minimum possible extent.”

“A bad example was IKEA. We looked at the company as part of the course and they use young people to make their products, working in very bad conditions. You buy cheap products but you need to realise how they are made.”

“I don't think it's the role of business or employers to sacrifice their profitability for environmental ethics. Smart regulations should ensure that. However, businesses should be held accountable for any 'sustainability' claims they make.”

Choosing employers

There is evidence that the trend to more ethical and responsible employers is affecting the graduate job market and the demand for more particular competencies from recent graduate recruits.

Students/graduates were concerned about the kind of employer for whom they work. They often judged and selected potential employers based on their reputation and commitment to sustainable development and corporate social responsibility. However, responsible employer practice was a differentiating but not a decisive factor for students and recent graduates in choosing an employer. Peers, the media and university culture were also significant influences on their selection. The research showed evidence that the proportion of students/graduates who want to work for responsible organisations is growing.

The overall impression from the three focus groups was that about a third of the attendees would greatly consider the ethics of a company before choosing an employer, a third would not particularly consider it, and a third would consider it although it would not be a priority.

The employment sector of choice was the private sector. The least popular sector was the voluntary or third sector.

Most student/recent graduate respondents agree that career progression and professional development (68%) and atmosphere and culture of the workplace (64%) were the most important criteria when selecting a potential employer and job, followed by location and local

environment (53%) and pay and perks (45%). These were seen as more important than the social and environmental ethics of the employer (37%). However the financial performance of the employer (21%) was seen as the least important.

Nearly a fifth of respondents (17%) always considered the social and environmental ethics of an employer before making a career decision. Over half the respondents (56%) had at some time considered the social and environmental ethics of an employer before making a career choice, whilst about a quarter (27%) had never done so.

Students considered the social performance of employers (41%) relatively more important than their financial performance (35%), closely followed by their environmental performance (30%), for choosing a future employer.

Comments included:

“For all the people trying to save the world or promote good social environments, etc. there is little point joining an organisation that practices these things because nothing will change! It would perhaps be far more effective to join an organisation with a bad reputation for these things and try to change it.”

“I believe that if given the choice between two similar universities or employers, the graduate would almost always opt for the ethical one.”

“It’s easier to train someone than change their whole attitude towards the industry. They are looking for the right attitude rather than skills.”

Researching employers

Students/graduates identified a range of ways in which they find out about the environmental and social responsibilities of potential employers. They also commented on the support and advice they received for their research.

Websites and leaflets were seen as easily the most common source of information about the social and environmental performance of employers (72%) for recent graduates, followed by job adverts (32%) and reputation with friends (27%). Employer’s staff and reception (18%), annual reports (17%), indices and league tables (13%) were seen as the least used.

Comments included:

“Surely a healthy society has people working for a living at things they enjoy doing, are helpful to the rest of society, and that they can make a living doing. These kind of careers do exist, but if you want to find them you are usually on your own.”

“It is sometimes difficult to judge whether the public persona of a company’s social responsibility is a true reflection of their core values and of what actually happens in the company. For example, BP promoting social responsibility and at the same time trying to drill in areas that would destroy local wildlife and the local human community’s homes and cultures. There seems to be an increase in green and socially-minded companies but it is becoming increasingly difficult to determine whether this is simply companies greening themselves to benefit their public image or whether it is something they value.”

“It would be of benefit to know how to best get environmental and ethical information about companies we are interested in working for. I think this could be delivered within the PDP framework of university courses.”

“It’s difficult to make a reasoned judgement about an employer if you’ve not made specific investigations into whether they are socially/environmentally friendly. Reading a newspaper headline does not necessarily give the full picture.”

Learning at university

Students/graduates were concerned about the preparation for their employment provided by universities. A small proportion of the students had already been formally educated about such issues at university, whilst the majority had developed an interest outside their studies.

A large majority of students and recent graduates believed that sustainable development and CSR should be taught more at universities. There was a strong interest from students to learn more about CSR and sustainable development, regardless of students’ area of study.

Nearly a quarter of the respondents (24%) had never asked for advice from their university career service, whilst 15% asked for a lot of advice. However 70% said they would like to get careers advice from their university as part of their course, and a quarter (25%) said they may like to get more advice. Over half (52%) said they would like to get more advice from their university career service on how to research the social and environmental responsibility of an employer, and a third said they may like to get such advice.

Comments included:

“During my second year I had a module called Professional Studies which covered issues such as ethics in the work place.”

“I have never been taught anything to do with sustainability on my degree – which is a very important design issue.”

“Ethical behaviour and the environment are important to me regarding an employer, especially in the tourism business.”

Practicing responsibility

The student/graduate respondents expected more of their future employers and their universities than of themselves, in terms of their social and environmental responsibility.

Students and graduates had higher expectations of their future employers than of their own current practice in terms of recycling (54% expected employers to always recycle, compared to 37% of students who always recycle). The same pattern was found for conserving energy (58% and 24%), buying environmentally-friendly products (37% and 10%), buying locally (25% and 24%), investing ethically (37% and 7%), supporting public transport (39% and 36%), supporting charities (31% and 19%) and supporting volunteering (35% and 10%).

The student/graduate's most preferred socially- and environmentally-responsible practice in the future by their university was recycling (78%) and conserving energy (76%), followed by supporting the use of public transport (65%), supporting volunteer work (60%) and buying environmentally-friendly products (59%). The order of preference relates closely to their own practice and their expected practice for future employers, although they expect others to do more in terms of supporting volunteering, investing ethically and buying environmentally-friendly products.

The most common indicators of the regular social and environmental responsibility of students/graduates were recycling (37%), using public transport (36%), shopping locally (24%), conserving energy (24%), supporting a charity (19%), buying environmentally-friendly products (10%), volunteering (10%) and investing ethically (7%).

Needing employment

Students/graduates often said that the social and environmental responsibility of the employer was not the main deciding factor, but a differentiating one in their choice of job. Their main concern was to get a job.

Comments included:

“It is sometimes difficult to consider all the social, ethical and environmental policies of potential employers, especially when it is so hard to find a job without five years experience in the field!”

“In an ideal world, we could make our decision about employment based on the most ethical and environmentally-friendly employers. But in the real world, the suitable jobs are often with less ethical companies and, in order to live, we must make a compromise.”

“In my very long experience, if you're poor, had limited access to education, and desperate for a job, you can't be too particular about an employer's ethics. I live in the real world and have had to take any job I can get just to survive – irrespective of my/their ethical values. Notwithstanding, I have tried to be 'a good citizen' throughout my working life because I do have a social conscience.”

“The main concern to graduates is to get a job in the first place! When we have the opportunity to choose to work for a more ethically-sound employer, I am sure we would all do it. But at the end of the day, we need a job, we need money to live, so this is not a

major concern amongst graduates. Ask people already employed, I'm sure your results will be different."

"Employers need to be more willing to offer summer work experience placements. They all want students to have experience when they finish university and enter the job market. But many are unwilling to give them the chance to gain it!"

Employers

Recruiting graduates

There was both direct and indirect evidence that some employers, especially larger businesses, considered the social/environmental ethics, values and experience of university students as part of their graduate recruitment. The research showed evidence that there is a growing proportion of employers who want to attract recent graduates with responsible values that fit their own.

About a quarter of HR staff of employers said that their policies on sustainable development or corporate social responsibility affect the way they recruit recent graduates.

Most employers focused on career progression and professional development (59%) to attract potential graduate employees, closely followed by the types of services or goods provided to customers (58%) and the atmosphere and culture of the workplace (47%). These were seen as more important than the social and environmental ethics of the employer (23%), the pay and perks (31%) or the location and local environment (26%). However larger businesses thought that social and environmental ethics was relatively more important than other sectors did. The financial performance of the employer was seen as the least important.

Over 40% said they always mentioned social and environmental responsibility. About 75% of employers said they had included it in staff training at some time and about two thirds said they had included it in staff induction at some time, with about a quarter always including it in staff training and induction.

Over half of employers had at some time used social and environmental responsibility in their selection of recent graduates and in their questions as staff interviewers. Equally, over half of employers had been asked about it by recent graduates at interview. Also over half (54%) said that they will be looking in the future to employ recent graduates that are socially and environmentally responsible.

Comments included:

"We have a CSR policy, schemes to protect the environment and a Good cause fund. We are listed as a Sunday Times Best Small Company to work for, something we are aware has a positive impact for us when we are recruiting. The next stage for us to work on is how we increase awareness of what we do both internally and externally." – *Brita*

"We have included sustainability and waste management into our factors that need to be satisfied by a graduate applicant." – *Jackson Civil Engineering Ltd*

"Graduates who can demonstrate that they have undertaken charity or volunteer work at university are well respected." – *Grant Thornton*

"Sustainable development is part of our business plan and therefore we need graduates to help us deliver." – *East Midlands Regional Authority*

"We promote our CSR policy as part of our recruitment campaign as we require all our graduates to take their social responsibilities seriously." – *Yorkshire Water*

"We are focussed on the long term, so recruiting graduates who will stay with us is important so us." – *EDF Energy*

"We include behavioural questions on ethics/values in the recruitment process." – *Ciba Speciality Chemicals plc*

"We are keen to select graduates with keen social awareness. CSR activities are encouraged." – *Brabners Chaffe Street Solicitors*

"We promote CSR to undergraduates so they understand how important it is to us as an organisation." – *KPMG*

“Whilst corporate and environmental responsibility is taken seriously by the firm, and actively promoted, it does not feature as highly on the agenda for trainee recruitment as highly as other skills and personality requirements. Overall, this is built into the person profile we look to recruit, i.e., people who care about the local community, who are actively involved in charity or volunteer work and who try to minimise their environmental impact.” – *Anonymous legal firm*

“Increasingly we are aware that both graduates and more experienced candidates are looking for companies who take CSR seriously.” – *SkillFast-UK*

Comparing employers

The four main employment sectors – larger businesses, smaller businesses, public sector and voluntary sector – differed in their responses.

For the promotion, recruitment, staff induction and training in terms of social and environmental responsibility, larger businesses were most demanding. Over half the larger businesses often or always included social and environmental responsibilities in the staff induction and training.

The responses from businesses with over and under 500 employees differed significantly. Of the four employment sectors, businesses with over 500 employees were most supportive of an employer’s social and environmental responsibility and businesses with less than 500 employees were least supportive. The larger businesses claimed to be most aware of the value and promotion of their own social and environmental responsibility, as well as that of recent graduates whom they would wish to recruit. Over a third of the larger businesses (36%) always included social and environmental responsibility in the induction of recent graduates, as opposed to 13%-15% for smaller businesses, public bodies and voluntary organisations. Thirty-eight percent of the larger businesses were often asked about environmental and social responsibility by graduates at interview and 42% often used social and environmental responsibility in the selection of recent graduates.

Businesses with under 500 employees appeared to value social and environmental responsibilities less than larger businesses and organisations in the public and voluntary sectors. Only 33% of smaller businesses thought it was important for employers to take their social and environmental responsibility seriously, compared to 80% of larger businesses, 65% of public bodies and 57% of voluntary organisations.

Making commitments

Many employers had policies and staff specifically dedicated to environmental and social responsibility.

Nearly all the employers (87%) had a policy on sustainable development, environmental management or CSR, with only 10% currently developing one. A quarter (26%) said that their policy affects the way their organisation recruits staff.

Nearly three quarters of employers (70%) have a leading member of staff responsible for sustainable development or CSR.

The employers claimed they knew more about CSR than sustainable development, with all of them knowing the terms, about a third knowing a great deal about CSR and a quarter knowing a great deal about sustainable development. As a result the responses from human resource managers, specialist CSR or sustainable development managers and senior managers differed significantly.

Employer responsibilities were primarily to the local and global community and environment, and secondarily to local and global producers and suppliers. About 90% of employers agreed that it is important for employers to take seriously their responsibilities to society, the environment and the communities in which they operate. Eighty percent agreed that it will be financially rewarding for their organisation to be socially- and environmentally-responsible in the future (41% strongly agreed), whilst 62% claimed they were socially responsible and 64% claimed they were environmentally responsible.

Comments included:

“All UK and world businesses and governments have a responsibility to protect the environment and its resources, and its sustainability for the future. Most high calibre graduates are of the same view and it is encouraging that this work is being undertaken to support the next generation of business leaders in bringing about change to improve sustainability.” – *Bruntwood Ltd*

“A survey of 12 Chief Executives six months ago [with questions about] the top economic and business issues, ...the main concern [being] of energy (especially due to rises in gas prices), [revealed that businesses are] responding to changing consumer lifestyles and EU environmental legislation (e.g., about pollution control).” – *Proskills*

“Environmental responsibility is low, [b]ecause small organisations are poorly funded. But issues of travel and transport, energy and sustainable procurement [are important].” – *Skills for Care*

“The Council covers five employment sectors – higher education, further education, libraries and archives, work-based learning and community development. It has 1 to 1.2 million employees, mainly in the public sector. It is unique amongst the [Sector Skills Councils (SSC)] as employees are both receivers and givers of skills training and education. In this respect it is a centrally important SSC.” – *Lifelong Learning UK*

“The sector is dominated by micro-businesses. Ninety percent of the sector has less than five employees, of which 60% are sole traders. There is no data on graduate employment. The environmental industries recruit most graduates. Sustainable development is much more important to the sector than CSR. However social inclusion and animal welfare are important CSR issues for the sector.” – *LANTRA*

Teaching at university

Over half of the employers (55%) said universities should do more to prepare students for working with employers who are socially and environmentally responsible.

Informing recruits

Many employers, as well as students/graduates, rely on websites to research the social and environmental responsibilities of employers.

The social and environmental responsibility of employers was mentioned in publicly-accessible information (e.g., websites) at some time by nearly 90% of employers. Websites and leaflets (67%, 72% for students specifically) were seen as easily the most common source of information about employers for recent graduates, followed by job adverts (24%, 32% for students) and then reputation amongst friends (14%, 27% for students). Annual reports (13%, 17% for students), indices and league tables (10%, 13% for students) were seen as less used. So this is roughly the same proportion as for students/graduates.

The bank Dresdner Kleinwort, like an increasing number of employers, has a CSR section on their graduate recruitment webpages.

Supporting graduates

Many employers provide specialist induction and training for graduate recruits on their social and environmental responsibilities, particularly focusing on employee volunteering and charity work, but also on environmental management.

Comments included:

“We talk to graduates about our community affairs programmes and the ethical nature of our organisation.” – *Financial Services Authority*

“We place a lot of emphasis in promoting our sustainability strategy to graduates.” – *Carillion plc*

“Sustainable development is important to us as an organisation and is also something that our graduates value.” – *ABN Amro*

“[We] have established [our] own Graduate Corporate Social Responsibility initiative called n:gage – the umbrella name for National Express: Group and Graduates Engaging.” – *The National Express Group*

Needing competencies

Many employers, as well as Sector Skills Councils, believe that they need graduate recruits and staff with specific competencies to support their social and environmental responsibilities.

Comments included:

“Most activity in terms of social responsibility is with the community development sector, where the needs are widening participation, diversity and social cohesion. [We are] developing a skills needs assessment. The National Occupational Standards for community development workers include competencies for developing sustainable communities.” – *Lifelong Learning UK*

“SEMTA is aiming to develop a Careers and Competence Framework which include[s] sustainable development and CSR in its detailed job-specific skills for each sector. The main driver for change in teaching and learning about sustainable development and CSR is the UK-SPEC. This is the UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence. It was developed by panels representing professional engineering institutions.” – *SEMTA*

“[We have] staff with specific responsibility for sustainability. Research by Annie Hall on sustainable development [has been completed] in the construction industry. [We have] developed [a] strategic action plan and what skills [are] required, which will influence the National Occupational Standards.” – *ConstructionSkills*

“Sustainability [is] one of several cross-cutting themes to be considered by all the Sector Skills Councils (SSC), alongside equal opportunities and health and safety. Sustainability will now be recognised by the SSC through the Sector Skills Agreements, most of which have now been developed. Sector Skills Agreements are being developed by the Councils as one of the tools to change the balance from the supply side (of universities and others) to the demand side (of employers).” – *Sector Skills Development Agency*

“Sustainable development is close to the heart of the SSC and is recognised as a cross-cutting theme like health and safety. It is included in the skills mapping and considered by all the working groups of employers. The Council covers three employment sectors – the animal health industry, land management and production, [and] environmental industries. Each has a section on sustainable development in the Foundation Degree Frameworks that are being developed.” – *LANTRA*

“Consultation with employers on the foundation degree shows that they want many of the competencies associated with sustainable development and CSR – making links [and] seeing the bigger picture [which is] especially valued for the professional development of managers.” – *Financial Services Skills*

“Consumer confidence in the installers of renewable technologies, such as photovoltaic cells and wind turbines, will be lost unless there is considerable up-skilling. For example, the installation and maintenance of much renewable technology equipment needs the skills of a team of plumbers, electricians, scaffolders and roofers to work together at the same time, or for small businesses to have highly multi-skilled staff.” – *Summit Skills*

“Employers see that commitments to sustainable development can give a competitive edge, especially in public sector contracts, as government departments aim to become carbon neutral by 2012.” – *SEMTA*

“Huge growth predicted in microgeneration, for example in large-scale new build, [...] will demand a new set of skills.” – *Summit Skills*

“[Sustainable development is the] top priority of [the] sector – yes definitely. Employers say sustainable development is “what they do”, as it is central to the management of energy, water and waste. Most skills required are traditional but there are unique skills required for new product development. Sectors, especially water, [are] keen to develop a marketing brand that is strongly associated with sustainable development.” – *Energy and Utility Skills*

“The issues of graduate level skills and knowledge pertaining to CSR and sustainability have a sector-specific dimension and are growing in prominence. Key concerns are 1) sustainability issues in the supply chain and the need for ethical sourcing – use of toxic chemicals at many stages of production, water consumption in cotton cultivation, energy use in laundering, high waste volumes of clothing etc.; and 2) responding to social concerns – low paid workers in developing countries, use of codes of practice in respect of labour standards, etc. However, it’s my view that only recently has consumer pressure really been brought to bear on the sector; large companies aside, the business challenges and associated skills needs are not widely appreciated and articulated by employers except where there is a direct impact through direct regulation, for example. Conversely, I suspect the performance and image of sector companies in this area has a major and growing impact on the career choices of the most able graduates.” – *SkillFast-UK*

“Social responsibilities around globalisation and social cohesion are high priorities. Environmental responsibilities are less of a priority, although the new build of educational establishments has demands for innovation in terms of sustainable design and environmental management.” – *Lifelong Learning UK*

“Sustainable development is one of the top 10 priorities for the sector. Ethical production and fair trade are increasingly important issues in the sector.” – *SkillFast-UK*

Working across disciplines

Many Sector Skills Councils encouraged more interdisciplinarity in universities as a way of teaching more about social and environmental responsibility.

Comments included:

“Compartmentalisation in universities is a big issue for us. There is a need for interdisciplinarity. For example, social care and social models of the economy look at human capital as well as financial capital. If you invest in this, it will help that. Research Councils, such as ESRC, push interdisciplinarity with cross-sector investigations, learning and research. But it is not seen as a career-enhancing move in universities to work with other departments.” – *Skills for Care*

Working with universities

The Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) want to develop closer links with universities, enabling academic staff to understand the needs of employers in terms of their social and environmental responsibilities.

Comments included:

“Certain employers and universities are working well together but it generally needs more work on both sides.” – *Energy and Utility Skills*

“SSCs are new and developing their relationships with the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres and professional bodies. They now provide a wider view of the employer perspective on particular sectors and hence for particular Subject Centres.” – *LANTRA*

“We should close the loop on the demand and supply side in terms of graduate employability and sustainable development by employers.” – *SEMTA*

University careers staff

University careers staff and graduate recruiters confirmed the recent growth in student demand for information and guidance on the social and environmental reputation and performance of employers.

Recruiting students

Most respondents said their universities did not advertise their policy of social and environmental ethics to attract potential students. However, a third of respondents were not clear about their policies.

Working with employers

Twenty-five percent of university careers staff said they actively seek to work with socially- and environmentally-responsible employers.

Advising students

University careers staff confirmed a growing trend for students and employers to consider the employer's social and environmental responsibility.

Most respondents (84%) recognised that it will be financially rewarding for employers to be socially- and environmentally-responsible in the future, and most (81%) agreed that universities should do more to prepare students for working with employers in terms of their social and environmental responsibilities. Most respondents (64%) also agreed that students increasingly considered the social and environmental values of potential employers. However only about a quarter said they informed students about an employer's responsibilities to the local community and or the environment.

Comments included:

“Employers that I have visited in recent weeks (HSBC, PWC) were keen to emphasise their CSR. They felt a need to respond to some of the perceived negative impressions held by students in respect to corporate bodies.”

Teaching competencies

University careers staff suggested that the six selected sustainability competencies should be more recognised in university teaching. HE Academy Subject Centre staff identified some of the main drivers for curriculum change in terms of competencies related to social and environmental responsibility.

Comments included:

“Higher education should be at the forefront of this. We are educating the brightest for the future so we need them to be aware, etc.”

“I think there would have to be a sea change before these competences become paramount throughout [higher education]. These relate to the concept of gradueness and values.”

“Uni does not seem to be a time of thinking – it is media, alcohol, designer label dominated. Yet students are aware of issues but maybe postpone dealing with them. We want to develop a workshop to help students discuss issues, research institutions, ask questions and present their aspirations.”

“Ethics is a touchy subject for English academic staff. They encourage students to identify and judge viewpoints and perspectives in any writing, to search for alternative viewpoints, and understand the factors that influence these viewpoints. This critical, independent, academic approach is typical of many of the humanities. Students should be skilled at looking critically at any written material that promotes an employer's social and environmental responsibilities.” *English Subject Centre*

“[The] main driver for engineering academic staff is the UK Spec devised by the Engineering Council (representing the engineering professional bodies) [and] the QAA. This describes benchmark statements, some of which cover social and environmental responsibilities. These are used by the professional bodies to accredit courses.” *Engineering Subject Centre*

“Professional body standards, when used for accrediting courses, are a major driver for incorporating CSR and sustainable development in curriculum, increasingly followed by the new National Occupational Standards. In 1999 the British Computer Society included the requirement to cover the legal, ethical and social aspects of IT.” *Information and Computer Sciences Subject Centre*

“Young people's values are still developing rapidly while they are at university, [and are] especially influenced by their peers. They may easily change when they move into full employment, become householders and adult consumers or develop long-term relationships and families.” *English Subject Centre*

“Students may be far too ready to sign up to media hype about the environment without the critical analysis that is needed [to] make sense of the soundbites.” *Art, Design and Media Subject Centre*

Practicing responsibility

Several staff, as well as students, were cynical about university statements of responsibility.

Comments included:

“Our institution talks up its environmental virtue, but uses throwaway plastic cups exclusively in the cafeteria, as well as throwaway salad boxes, soda in plastic bottles, coffee stirrers, paper, etc.”

Choosing employers

Some Subject Centres recognised their student's interests.

Comments included:

“Most students would rate working ethically above working profitably.” *Art, Design and Media Subject Centre*

Working across disciplines

The need for interdisciplinarity was recognised by some Subject Centres.

Comments included:

“Interdisciplinarity may occur most where English blurs into Media Studies, for example, with Cultural Studies.” *English Subject Centre*

“We need to promote institutional interdisciplinarity, but the system inhibits it – for example, enterprise education needs an interdisciplinary approach.” *Information and Computer Sciences Subject Centre*

Needing competencies

Some Subject Centres recognised the employer's needs for social and environmental responsibility.

Comments included:

“Professionals in this sector are increasingly aware of environmental and social impacts, and increasingly creative at reducing these impacts or developing appropriate responses.” *Art, Design and Media Subject Centre*

“There is a mismatch in this respect between employer requirements and student competencies. Generally IT student are not good at soft skills.” *Information and Computer Sciences Subject Centre*

“Sustainable development is an important issue in the IT sector.” *Information and Computer Sciences Subject Centre*

Indicators of responsible practice

Practicing responsibility

Eight indicators that are commonly associated with socially- and environmentally-responsible practice were selected to compare the views of students/graduates, employers and university career staff. They were:

- Recycle
- Support a charity
- Volunteer work
- Use public transport
- Invest ethically
- Buy locally

- Conserve energy
- Buy environmentally-friendly products

For all three questionnaire respondent groups – students/graduates, employers and university careers staff – recycling (35%) was the most commonly selected indicator, followed by using public transport (33%) and conserving energy (29%) by all respondents. The least commonly selected were investing ethically, buying locally, and buying environmentally-friendly products (17 – 19%).

There is considerable difference in the claimed activities and expectations of the three different groups of respondents, with students/graduates expecting more from their future employers and their universities than themselves, as well as employers claiming more activities by their organisations than they expect from potential employees in their home life.

Twenty-one percent of students claimed they always do these activities, whilst 39% expect a future employer to always do these activities, and 61% expect their universities to always do these activities in the future. Six percent of employers always expected a potential employee to do these activities in their home life, whilst 33% of employers claimed that their organisations always do these activities. Fourteen percent of university careers staff claim their university always does these activities, but only five percent expect students/graduates to always do these activities.

Sustainability competencies

There was some evidence to suggest that there is a gap between graduate competencies and employer requirements for graduate competencies in relation to an employer's social and environmental responsibilities.

Six competencies commonly associated with environmental and social responsibility were selected to compare the views of students/graduates, employers and university careers staff. They were:

- Analyse using many disciplines
- Judge using precaution as well as scientific evidence
- Act as a responsible citizen locally and globally
- Plan for the long term as well as the short term
- Use resources efficiently
- Think of the whole system and the links

The last three competencies (planning, efficiency and systems thinking) were viewed by all respondents as more important than the first three competencies. Most of the university careers staff (63%) believed employers considered these competencies when recruiting graduates. Nearly one in five employers (19%) always considered them when recruiting graduates.

A third of all respondents considered these competencies as very important to develop through university education, with students/graduates at 25%, university careers staff at 39% and employers at 31%. "Planning for the long term as well as the short term" was viewed as the most important competency to develop (41%), with "judge using precaution as well as scientific evidence" (23%) and "act as a responsible citizen locally and globally" (22%) as the least important of the selected competencies.

There was considerable difference in the views about student/graduate competence. A quarter of the students/graduates were completely confident in these selected competencies, in the same proportions as they considered them very important. However, university careers staff had much less confidence in their competence (0%) and employers were also less confident (3%).

Commentary

Students/graduates

Clarifying values

Careers with a conscience are important to graduates. They do not want to give the 70,000 hours of their working life to an organisation that does not match their values. Some consider it even more important than traditional attractions like status and money. Today's graduates invariably have a well-developed social conscience and want to do more over a lifetime than make lots of money. They also want to feel that they are making a difference to people's lives.

Having a voice

Students are increasingly having a socially- and environmentally-conscious voice about both university and employer practices. People and Planet, a student-led environmental and anti-poverty action group, has recently produced a Green League table of UK universities. This follows similar student action in the US which is having a significant impact on university admissions. The Corporate Social Responsibility Student Movement (CSRSM) was established in June 2005 in Singapore to raise awareness about CSR within the student body, encouraging interest and further research into this area. This student voice is likely to grow stronger in the UK as universities try to attract bright and motivated students.

Choosing employers

Students/graduates have increasingly high expectations of employers to operate in a socially- and environmentally-responsible manner, echoing the expectations of employees, consumers, shareholders and governments. They may rule out applying for a suitable employment opportunity because of the nature and culture of the employer, or because of negative publicity around its environmental or employment practices.

In the current graduate employment marketplace, graduate job hunters as 'customers' are aware and concerned about environmental and social issues. Evidence shows that the proportion of graduates wanting to work for a responsible organisation is growing. Corporate responsibility is increasingly the key factor in attracting and retaining a talented and diverse graduate workforce. Significant numbers actively take these issues into account when deciding which employers to apply to. Most graduates have a strong belief in the power of responsible business practice to improve profitability over time.

Students/graduates want to work for an employer whose values are consistent with their own and they will stay with the organisation while this consistency remains. The challenge is that employers are not seen to respond to these demands as employee expectations rise.

Trusting employers

As students/graduates are sceptical of many of the ethical claims of, especially, larger businesses, there is more of a challenge to employers to convince potential graduate recruits of the tangible evidence of their social and environmental ethics. At a time of graduate, as well as public, cynicism about business, it is important that employers are honestly and practically committed to their stated social and environmental responsibilities. However students/graduates are two-faced, like many people including employers, in terms of their social and environmental values and practice. On all sides, "PR" should be seen to mean more than just Public Relations – it should include Practising Responsibility.

Needing employment

Debt and inexperienced financial management have a big impact on students'/graduates' ethical practice as they expect others to do more than they do, especially where consumer purchasing and leisure time are concerned.

Employers

Recruiting graduates

An employer's social and environmental responsibility has become a vital recruitment weapon in the battle for top-quality graduate employees. Those employers who neglect this may be shutting the door on some of the country's top talent.

Employers that are socially and environmentally responsible can attract a talented and diverse graduate workforce. The drivers for environmentally- and socially-responsible employer practice include the innovation and creativity by staff; attraction and retention of staff; as well as avoidance of litigation, prosecution and penalties. There are clear benefits to employers of aligning their values and interests to their employees. So recruiting the right graduate is vital to the future of many organisations.

Making commitments

Much related research and media coverage shows the emerging needs and interests of employers in terms of sustainable development and CSR. Sustainability, sustainable development and CSR are now commonly used terms by public and private sector employers. Many FTSE500 businesses have incorporated sustainable development and CSR into their annual reporting, management and operations. There is increasing evidence that small- to medium-sized enterprises are being obliged, through the supply chain, legislation and general stakeholder demand, to adopt these principles and practices. All employment sectors are affected by this trend, whether consultancy, financial services, tourism, engineering or marketing. In the public sector, the greening of all government departments, agencies and local authorities is generating changes in organisational culture which rapidly translate into recruitment.

Universities

Teaching competencies

Many students/graduates, academic staff and employers believe that social and environmental responsibility and ethics should be incorporated into campus management, teaching and learning, and community links with universities. There is strong student interest in learning more about sustainable development and CSR, regardless of the area of study.

There are several key drivers for change in university teaching and learning with, about and for social and environmental responsibility. These increasingly seem to be the standards for the accreditation of courses by professional bodies, and the growing number of National Occupational Standards, supplemented by the growing number of Sector Skills Agreements. Students, especially in relatively non-sector-specific subjects, could rightly argue that their interests and needs for broad liberal education are a balancing driver for change. Some government departments (such as DEFRA, DfID and DfES) are increasingly arguing for transformative education that changes human behaviour as a route to a sustainable society. There is a common thread to these drivers and it is change towards more responsible professional practice.

Working across disciplines

A major challenge is the cultural and institutional difference between the world of work and the world of academia. Employers who are committed to sustainable development and CSR engage with an increasingly wide range of stakeholders. Employers value generalists and adapters and perceive academics valuing specialism. Sector Skills Councils often view university academics as conservative specialists who resist engagement and dialogue outside their departments for fear of losing academic/research status and the erosion of their discipline specialism.

Working with employers

There seems to be a mismatch between what university students/graduates learn and what employers want, partly because neither universities nor employers can specify what is required in a common language. There is a need for mutual understanding between these two worlds. Higher education staff, careers advisory services, and students/graduates as well as employers

share the same understanding and speak the same language when considering the relationship between graduate employability and employer sustainability. Also, students/graduates must be able to express and promote to potential employers the sustainability competencies skills and values they have developed.

The professional bodies and Sector Skills Councils could act as useful partners for the Subject Centres in exploring how education for sustainable development fits with both the supply and demand side in terms of university teaching and learning. Fundamentally, the funding for universities, with its emphasis on research, does not encourage market research, partnerships and risk-taking in the development of teaching and learning that meets the needs of both employers and students. The rapidly emerging commitments of employers to sustainable development and CSR may not yet be a paradigm shift in the world of employment but it does indicate a significant cultural change amongst recruiters to which both students and university staff should respond.

Recommendations

The research revealed a number of important insights with implications for university teaching and learning, university management and funding, human resource strategies, reputation management, and communications with employers.

Teaching at university

Raise academic staff awareness about sustainable development and CSR

Both social and environmental responsibility should be considered together as they are inseparable. Sustainable development should be equally recognised and understood alongside CSR.

Academic staff should have their awareness raised about sustainable development and CSR from the perspective of the university campus and management, as well as from sector-specific employers. This could focus on the needs and interests of employers and students about the social and environmental responsibilities of professionals in their sector, with support from appropriate Sector Skills Council and professional bodies.

Relate student and staff volunteering to academic learning

Academics should take more interest in student volunteering like some innovative Continuing Professional Development (CPD) practices amongst employers. Many employers see the professional development benefits of employee volunteering.

New and innovative strategic relationships between academic departments and student volunteering should be created, for example, in local community groups, schools and care homes, through student unions or employment units, as well as through employee volunteering which already has links to CPD.

Link universities and employers

Create new, innovative strategic relationships between universities and employers, as well as between academic departments, for example, social care employers with business schools, health sciences departments with economics departments..

Link sustainable development and CSR on campus with teaching and learning

Both academic staff and students may have little experience of employers other than educational institutions. So this would be an appropriate starting point for any exploration of the ethics of employers – their motives, promotions, practices and policies. This would enable students to understand, identify and develop the values and practices associated with socially- and environmentally-responsible employers.

Influence the educators for sustainable development

Staff with responsibility for education for sustainable development (ESD) in the Higher Education Academy, the Higher Education Funding Council of England, key government departments, the Academy for Sustainable Communities and the Learning and Skills Council

could consult with key staff from Lifelong Learning UK to identify the skills needs of lifelong learning staff in order to deliver ESD in line with the recent ESD policies and frameworks for the formal education sector.

Build on student behaviour

The commonest indicators of student responsibility (recycling, using public transport, shopping locally, etc.) should be used as starting points/hooks for translating the student's responsibilities to other behaviours, and for reinforcing their current behaviours so they endure into working life beyond university.

Alternatively, the student's least common indicators of responsibility and their view of the most common indicators of employer responsibility could be used as starting points for teaching and learning, for example, investing ethically, buying environmentally-friendly products and supporting charities and volunteering.

Advising students

Raise awareness of careers staff about sustainable development and CSR

The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) could raise the awareness of careers and employability staff about employers' approaches to work-life balance, employee volunteering, ethical investment and consumption, resource efficiency, etc, and about how to critically judge their statements on sustainable development and CSR. This could be done using the local case study of the university employer. There were lots of "don't knows" from careers staff about the ethics of the university's financial practices. Careers advice is one area where universities, professional bodies and employers come together. Career advisers should know what questions students could ask and be asked by employers about their environmental and social responsibilities.

Guide students/graduates

Higher Education Academy Subject Centres could work with AGCAS and/or related professional bodies to produce guidance for students/ graduates, including emerging trends in employability and sustainability, and case studies of responsible employers. It could also include guidance on how to clarify and express their own attitudes, behaviour and values, how to research and judge the values of a potential employer, and how to judge the added value of work experience.

Educate about careers as part of courses

Careers advice on what makes socially- and environmentally-responsible employers and how to spot them as a more integral part of taught courses could be developed. This already happens with several university careers services but the impetus has to come from academic staff.

Teaching competencies

Match academic and work-related competencies

The 28 Student Employability Competencies, defined by the Council for Industry and Higher Education and others, provide a common language for students, graduates, HEIs and employers in terms of recruitment and training by employers, course design by academics, and advice from careers services. These competencies could be mapped against the Government's requirements for sustainability literacy amongst professional graduates. Rather than just skills or understanding, they particularly focus on values – the personal or corporate guiding principles that lead to sustainable behaviour and action.

Student Employability Profiles could be mapped with the newly emerging Sector Skills Agreements to highlight opportunities for enhancing sustainability literacy. The HE Academy Subject Centres could work with their associated professional bodies and Sector Skills Councils to use the Sector Skills Agreements and National Occupational Standards as a focus for exploring the sector-specific competencies related to sustainability required by employers. These competencies could be mapped to the Student Employability Profiles developed by the Subject Centres. SEMTA is aiming to develop a Careers and Competence Framework which includes sustainable development and CSR in its detailed job-specific skills for each sector.

Promote values education

Teaching and learning that explores personal and organisational values and ethics, especially related to social and environmental responsibilities, could be explored through interdisciplinarity, campus management, employability or careers modules, and careers services.

Promote citizenship alongside university teaching and learning as a key part of studentship

Local and global citizenship may not be a key competence for employers but it should be the responsibility of the university to support this through its own culture and management, stakeholder engagement, and its approach to volunteering and the local community.

Comparing students

Replicate this research related to specific subjects and employment sectors

Any mismatch between the subject-specific ESD interests and needs of students and the ESD interests and needs of employers in related sectors, working with appropriate Sector Skills Councils and professional bodies, could be researched.

Developing curricula

Raise awareness about funding streams to market research employer and student needs and interests, and develop new teaching and learning

Universities could use new funding streams to develop partnerships with employers, professional bodies, and others in order to market research and develop new teaching and learning approaches based on the competencies required for employer environmental and social responsibility. These may be continuing professional development (CPD), or undergraduate or foundation degrees. Funding may come from a variety of sources such as HEFCE's Strategic Development Fund (new funding for regional Higher Level Skills pathfinder projects), the new 2007-2013 EU Leonardo Fund for Partnership for the development and transfer of vocational training.

Explore new curriculum opportunities

The new Specialised Diplomas and Foundation courses are already showing signs of taking on board new employer interests in sustainable development and CSR, potentially isolating full time degree courses from the world of work. For example, the new Business Administration and Finance Foundation course has a proposed Sustainability option and a topic on CSR in the draft Specialised Diploma at Level 2.

Changing university culture

Faced with climate change, globalisation and the changing nature of society and governance, all employment sectors are being encouraged to welcome culture change as a route to more sustainable behaviour change. HEIs are no exception. They particularly need to respond quickly to the rapid changes in the world of socially- and environmentally-responsible work. This is not just a call for more vocational elements in university education. It is also a liberal route to enabling students to clarify and express their own values, matching them with those of prospective employers. Lastly, it can also be a move towards more transformative education enabling students/graduates and the whole HEI community to adopt more socially- and environmentally-responsible behaviour.

Enabling commitments

New ways in which employers and new graduates can make mutual ethical commitments to their social and environmental responsibilities could be explored. StudentForce for Sustainability is currently considering how a series of stakeholders could make formal commitments such as those below.

Students could aim to identify and minimise the social and environmental impacts of their future jobs or professions, as well as to improve the social and environmental responsibility of their future employers.

Career and employment services workers could aim to help students and new graduates identify the social and environmental impacts of possible jobs or professions and judge the social and environmental responsibility of possible employers.

Employers could aim to value social and environmental responsibility as part of graduate recruitment in order to minimise their own social and environmental impacts.

Professional bodies

Professional bodies could aim to support the social and environmental responsibility of new graduate members.

Appendices

Student/graduate questionnaire survey and results

1392 responses from university students and recent graduates - 4 December 2006
In which of the following sectors do you anticipate a career?

1st and 2nd
column

	Yes	Maybe	No	
Multinational business	36.00%	38.50%	25.50%	74.50%
Public body or education	39.30%	45.00%	15.70%	84.30%
Small- and medium-sized business	33.20%	53.40%	13.40%	86.60%
Voluntary or not-for-profit organisation	20.20%	47.90%	31.90%	68.10%

Do you do any of the following?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	
Recycle	36.90%	34.30%	19.80%	6.40%	2.60%	71.20%
Support a charity	19.00%	26.60%	36.70%	14.10%	3.50%	45.60%
Volunteer work	10.40%	14.80%	31.40%	26.60%	16.70%	25.20%
Use public transport	36.20%	33.40%	18.70%	9.90%	1.80%	69.60%
Invest ethically	7.20%	16.70%	32.80%	22.10%	21.20%	23.90%
Shop locally	24.50%	46.80%	24.60%	3.60%	0.60%	71.30%
Conserve energy	24.20%	41.50%	27.40%	5.60%	1.30%	65.70%
Buy environmentally-friendly products	10.40%	36.70%	38.70%	11.70%	2.50%	47.10%

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

How far do you agree or disagree that the following are important when selecting a potential employer and job?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	
Financial performance of employer	21.00%	50.40%	20.90%	5.70%	1.90%	71.40%
Social and environmental ethics of employer	37.10%	49.00%	10.80%	2.60%	0.50%	86.10%
Services or goods provided to customer	38.30%	47.50%	11.50%	2.40%	0.40%	85.80%
Pay and perks	44.50%	46.80%	7.20%	1.20%	0.10%	91.30%
Location and local environment	53.50%	39.80%	5.20%	1.30%	0.20%	93.30%
Atmosphere and culture of workplace	64.10%	32.80%	2.40%	0.40%	0.30%	96.90%
Career progression and professional development	67.60%	29.30%	2.60%	0.50%	0.10%	96.90%

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

How far do you agree or disagree that employers should be responsible to the following?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	
Employees	78.10%	20.20%	1.30%	0.20%	0.10%	98.30%
The local and global community	48.90%	41.80%	7.50%	1.50%	0.30%	90.70%
Shareholders	35.20%	41.80%	17.40%	4.70%	1.10%	77.00%
Customers	68.40%	28.40%	2.30%	0.70%	0.10%	96.80%
The local and global environment	53.10%	39.50%	6.00%	1.00%	0.50%	92.60%
Local and global producers/suppliers	37.90%	48.10%	11.30%	2.40%	0.30%	86.00%

Would you expect your future employer to do any of the following?

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>	
Recycle	54.20%	35.30%	8.20%	1.90%	0.40%	89.50%
Support a charity	30.90%	38.70%	25.10%	4.10%	1.10%	69.60%
Support employee volunteer work	34.70%	35.70%	22.40%	6.00%	1.10%	70.40%
Support the use of public transport	39.10%	35.90%	19.00%	4.00%	2.00%	75.00%
Invest ethically	37.20%	36.40%	20.60%	4.00%	1.80%	73.60%
Buy locally	24.70%	39.10%	28.30%	6.70%	1.30%	63.80%
Conserve energy	57.90%	31.30%	8.50%	1.40%	0.90%	89.20%
Buy environmentally-friendly products	37.20%	39.40%	18.70%	3.80%	1.00%	76.60%

How far do you agree or disagree that the following are important for choosing your future employer?

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Tend to agree</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Tend to disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	
Financial performance	34.60%	46.90%	13.10%	4.40%	1.00%	81.50%
Environmental performance	29.60%	49.10%	16.60%	4.20%	0.50%	78.70%
Social performance	41.30%	47.10%	9.80%	1.60%	0.10%	88.40%

Have you ever considered the social and environmental ethics of an employer before making a career decision?

<i>Always</i>	16.90%
<i>Sometimes</i>	56.50%
<i>Never</i>	26.60%

SUSTAINABILITY COMPETENCIES

How important do you think the following competencies are to employers?

	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Quite important</i>	<i>Not important</i>	
Analyse using many disciplines	41.10%	50.20%	7.70%	1.00%	91.30%
Judge using precaution as well as scientific evidence	33.50%	51.90%	12.80%	1.80%	85.40%
Act as a responsible citizen locally & globally	34.40%	35.30%	20.20%	10.10%	69.70%
Plan for the long term as well as the short term	55.70%	34.90%	7.60%	1.70%	90.60%
Use resources efficiently	57.10%	33.30%	8.00%	1.60%	90.40%
Think of the whole system and the links	48.90%	39.70%	9.00%	2.30%	88.60%

How far do you feel you have you developed your abilities in each of these areas?

	<i>I feel completely competent</i>	<i>I feel largely competent</i>	<i>I feel fairly competent</i>	<i>I do not feel competent</i>	
Analyse using many disciplines	21.40%	51.60%	24.30%	2.70%	73.00%
Judge using precaution as well as scientific evidence	19.30%	52.20%	24.80%	3.70%	71.50%
Act as a globally responsible citizen locally and globally	22.70%	47.10%	26.60%	3.60%	69.80%
Plan for the long term as well as the short term	29.70%	47.80%	19.70%	2.80%	77.50%
Use resources efficiently	31.60%	49.40%	17.10%	1.90%	81.00%
Think of the whole system and the links	24.40%	50.90%	21.70%	3.00%	75.30%

How important is it that these competencies are developed through university education?

	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Quite Important</i>	<i>Not important</i>	
Analyse using many disciplines	64.60%	29.90%	4.50%	0.90%	94.50%
Judge using precaution as well as scientific evidence	53.30%	35.90%	8.90%	1.90%	89.20%
Act as a globally responsible citizen locally and globally	42.40%	33.10%	18.50%	6.00%	75.50%
Plan for the long term as well as the short term	57.70%	31.60%	8.50%	2.30%	89.30%
Use resources efficiently	54.80%	32.50%	10.40%	2.30%	87.30%
Think of the whole system and the links	54.90%	34.10%	9.30%	1.60%	89.00%

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Which of the following resources would you use to find out about the performance and values of a potential employer?

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>	
Website and leaflets	72.30%	22.40%	4.20%	0.70%	0.40%	94.70%
The employer's staff and reception	18.00%	33.40%	32.50%	13.30%	2.90%	51.40%
Customers and service provided	23.00%	40.50%	27.30%	7.20%	1.90%	63.50%
Job adverts	32.30%	37.20%	22.70%	6.60%	1.20%	69.50%
Annual reports	17.40%	26.60%	30.10%	18.90%	7.00%	44.00%
Indices and league tables	13.00%	26.90%	29.80%	21.60%	8.80%	39.90%
Reputation with friends	27.20%	40.50%	24.70%	5.70%	1.90%	67.70%

RESPECT FOR EMPLOYERS

Can you name the employer you most respect in terms of their social and environmental ethics?

100.00%

And the least respected employer?

100.00%

How far would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

"Most employers practice and promote good social and environmental values."

<i>Strongly agree</i>	2.40%
<i>Tend to agree</i>	27.20%
<i>Neither</i>	25.40%
<i>Tend to disagree</i>	36.10%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	6.60%
<i>Don't know</i>	2.30%

UNIVERSITY PRACTICE

"Most universities practice and promote good social and environmental values."

<i>Strongly agree</i>	8.40%
-----------------------	-------

<i>Tend to agree</i>	47.50%	
<i>Neither</i>	21.80%	55.90%
<i>Tend to disagree</i>	17.90%	
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	2.70%	20.60%
<i>Don't know</i>	1.70%	

What would you like your university do in the future in terms of social and environmental responsibility?

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>	
Recycle	78.20%	17.90%	3.40%	0.20%	0.20%	96.10%
Support a charity	44.20%	32.60%	18.40%	3.20%	1.60%	76.80%
Support volunteer work	60.00%	28.70%	9.90%	0.80%	0.60%	88.70%
Support use of public transport	65.20%	24.30%	8.50%	1.30%	0.70%	89.50%
Invest ethically	56.00%	28.50%	12.00%	2.20%	1.40%	84.50%
Buy locally	47.60%	31.80%	17.00%	2.80%	0.90%	79.40%
Conserve energy	75.80%	19.20%	3.90%	0.80%	0.30%	95.00%
Buy environmentally-friendly products	59.40%	27.90%	10.40%	1.60%	0.70%	87.30%

NEED FOR UNIVERSITY SUPPORT/CAREER ADVICE

Have you asked for advice from your university career service?

<i>A lot</i>	14.60%
<i>A little</i>	61.90%
<i>Never</i>	23.60%

Would you like to get careers advice from your university as part of your course?

<i>Yes</i>	69.60%
<i>Maybe</i>	24.80%
<i>No</i>	5.60%

Would you like to get more advice from your university careers service on how to research the social and environmental responsibility of an employer?

<i>Yes</i>	51.80%
<i>Maybe</i>	35.50%
<i>No</i>	12.70%

Employer questionnaire survey and results

87 responses mainly from human resources staff - 4 January 2007

Do you have a policy on sustainable development, environmental management or corporate social responsibility?

77.00%	Yes, in place
10.30%	Currently developing
6.90%	No
5.70%	Don't know

Does this policy affect the way your organisation recruits recent graduates?

26.30%	Yes
55.30%	No
18.40%	Don't know

In what way does this policy affect the way your organisation recruits recent graduates?

100.00%

Do you have a member of staff responsible for environmental management, sustainable development or corporate social responsibility?

54.00%	Yes, full time
16.10%	Yes, part time
18.40%	No
11.50%	Don't know

Does your organisation do any of the following?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Recycle	2.30%	0.00%	6.90%	46.00%	44.80%	0.00%
Support a charity	4.60%	1.10%	9.20%	23.00%	62.10%	0.00%
Support employee volunteer work	4.60%	8.00%	16.10%	23.00%	46.00%	2.30%
Support the use of public transport	3.40%	10.30%	9.20%	24.10%	44.80%	8.00%
Invest ethically	9.20%	5.70%	9.20%	18.40%	21.80%	35.60%
Buy locally	3.40%	3.40%	19.50%	31.00%	11.50%	31.00%
Conserve energy	0.00%	5.70%	17.20%	43.70%	25.30%	8.00%
Buy environmentally-friendly products	2.30%	2.30%	20.70%	51.70%	11.50%	11.50%

How often would your organisation expect a potential employee to do the following in their home life?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Recycle	12.60%	4.60%	11.50%	33.30%	12.60%	25.30%
Support a charity	12.60%	2.30%	26.40%	27.60%	5.70%	25.30%
Volunteer work	12.60%	4.60%	36.80%	17.20%	2.30%	26.40%
Use public transport	12.60%	4.60%	27.60%	27.60%	3.40%	24.10%
Invest ethically	16.10%	5.70%	18.40%	19.50%	4.60%	35.60%

Buy locally	13.80%	4.60%	25.30%	19.50%	3.40%	33.30%
Conserve energy	12.60%	4.60%	20.70%	29.90%	9.20%	23.00%
Buy environmentally-friendly products	13.80%	3.40%	23.00%	28.70%	4.60%	26.40%

How far would you agree or disagree that your organisation focuses on the following to attract potential employees?

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Tend to disagree</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Tend to agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Financial performance	8.00%	4.60%	13.80%	50.60%	23.00%
Social and environmental ethics	1.10%	11.50%	12.60%	51.70%	23.00%
Services or goods provided to customers	0.00%	3.40%	9.20%	28.70%	58.60%
Pay and perks	1.10%	8.00%	12.60%	47.10%	31.00%
Location and local environment	0.00%	8.00%	26.40%	39.10%	26.40%
Atmosphere and culture of workplace	0.00%	2.30%	12.60%	37.90%	47.10%
Career progression and professional development	0.00%	1.10%	6.90%	33.30%	58.60%

Within your organisation, is social or environmental responsibility.....

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
...mentioned in publicly-accessible information (e.g., on the website)?	5.70%	4.60%	16.10%	31.00%	42.50%
...used in the selection of recent graduates?	23.00%	18.40%	28.70%	18.40%	11.50%
...asked about by interviewers?	17.20%	26.40%	41.40%	8.00%	6.90%
...asked about by recent graduates at interview?	14.90%	25.30%	34.50%	20.70%	4.60%
...included in the induction of recent graduates?	17.20%	16.10%	18.40%	23.00%	25.30%
...included in staff training?	13.80%	11.50%	32.20%	21.80%	20.70%

How far would you disagree or agree with the following statements:

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Tend to disagree</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Tend to agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
It will be financially rewarding for our organisation to be socially and environmentally responsible in the future. We are responsible to both the local and global community.	3.40%	2.30%	11.50%	39.10%	41.40%	2.30%
We are responsible to both the local and global environment.	0.00%	0.00%	2.30%	33.30%	62.10%	2.30%
We are responsible to both our local and global producers/suppliers.	0.00%	2.30%	5.70%	25.30%	64.40%	2.30%
It is important for employers to take their responsibilities to society, the environment and the communities in which they operate seriously.	1.10%	3.40%	8.00%	42.50%	41.40%	3.40%
We will be looking in the future to employ recent graduates that are socially and environmentally responsible.	2.30%	1.10%	6.90%	23.00%	66.70%	0.00%
Most graduate applicants practice and promote good social and environmental values.	3.40%	9.20%	25.30%	37.90%	16.10%	8.00%
It is easy to find recent graduates whose social and environmental values fit with those of the organisation.	2.30%	9.20%	28.70%	35.60%	11.50%	12.60%
	1.10%	9.20%	28.70%	35.60%	16.10%	9.20%

Universities should do more to prepare students for working with employers who are socially and environmentally responsible.

3.40% 9.20% 25.30% 43.70% 11.50% 6.90%

Graduate applicants understand sustainable development and corporate social responsibility.

2.30% 8.00% 26.40% 46.00% 8.00% 9.20%

Which of the following would your organisation expect a recent graduate to use to research your organisation?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
Job adverts	1.10%	5.70%	20.70%	48.30%	24.10%
Website and leaflets	0.00%	0.00%	2.30%	31.00%	66.70%
Annual reports	5.70%	18.40%	35.60%	27.60%	12.60%
Indices and league tables	4.60%	12.60%	43.70%	28.70%	10.30%
Staff and reception at your organisation	4.60%	9.20%	33.30%	36.80%	16.10%
Customers and service provided	3.40%	11.50%	28.70%	44.80%	11.50%
Reputation amongst friends	2.30%	4.60%	18.40%	60.90%	13.80%

The following are competencies that specifically relate to environmental and social responsibility. How far do you disagree or agree that your organisation considers them when selecting recent graduates for staff posts?

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Tend to disagree</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Tend to agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Analyse using many disciplines	2.30%	6.90%	21.80%	48.30%	20.70%
Judge using precaution as well as scientific evidence	3.40%	10.30%	32.20%	41.40%	12.60%
Act as a responsible citizen locally and globally	2.30%	9.20%	28.70%	46.00%	13.80%
Plan for the long term as well as the short term	1.10%	3.40%	14.90%	58.60%	21.80%
Use resources efficiently	2.30%	2.30%	20.70%	52.90%	21.80%
Think of the whole system and the links	1.10%	3.40%	18.40%	54.00%	23.00%

What level of competency do you feel your current recent graduate applicants have in the following?

	<i>Not competent</i>	<i>Fairly competent</i>	<i>Largely competent</i>	<i>Completely competent</i>
Analyse using many disciplines	5.70%	46.00%	43.70%	4.60%
Judge using precaution as well as scientific evidence	14.90%	43.70%	37.90%	3.40%
Act as a globally responsible citizen locally and globally	8.00%	49.40%	37.90%	4.60%
Plan for the long term as well as the short term	10.30%	44.80%	42.50%	2.30%
Use resources efficiently	11.50%	41.40%	44.80%	2.30%
Think of the whole system and the links	12.60%	44.80%	40.20%	2.30%

How important is it that these competencies are developed through university education?

	<i>Not important</i>	<i>Quite important</i>	<i>Very important</i>
Analyse using many disciplines	2.30%	23.00%	33.30%
Judge using precaution as well as scientific evidence	4.60%	28.70%	27.60%
Act as a globally responsible citizen locally and globally	6.90%	21.80%	16.10%
Plan for the long term as well as the short term	1.10%	13.80%	46.00%
Use resources efficiently	3.40%	18.40%	34.50%

Think of the whole system and the links 4.60% 12.60% 51.70% 31.00%

Do you have any other comments or quotes that you wish to include?

18.40%

How much, if anything, did you know about the following before completing this questionnaire?

	<i>I'd never heard of it</i>	<i>Nothing at all</i>	<i>Not very much</i>	<i>A fair amount</i>	<i>A great deal</i>
Corporate Social Responsibility	0.00%	2.30%	9.20%	57.50%	31.00%
Sustainable Development	0.00%	0.00%	23.00%	51.70%	25.30%

Name:

100.00%

Job Title:

100.00%

Organisation:

100.00%

E-mail:

In which of the following categories is your organisation?

51.70%	Business with over 500 employees	23.00%	Public body or education
17.20%	Business with under 500 employees	8.00%	Voluntary or not-for-profit organisation

How many recent graduates are recruited each year, if any?

100.00%

Would you be prepared to take part in a telephone interview lasting up to 15 minutes, aimed at collecting qualitative data on the subject of social and environmental responsibility?

19.50% Yes 80.50% No

Please enter your telephone number below, omitting any spaces:

92.30%

University careers staff questionnaire survey and results

22 responses from University Careers Staff - 18 September 2006

How far would you disagree or agree with the following statements about your institution?

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Tend to disagree</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Tend to agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
We advertise our policy of social and environmental ethics to attract potential students.	21.70%	39.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	39.10%
We actively seek to work with socially- and environmentally-responsible employers.	13.00%	30.40%	0.00%	26.10%	0.00%	30.40%
Most students practice and promote good social and environmental values.	0.00%	39.10%	26.10%	21.70%	0.00%	13.00%
Most students understand sustainable development and corporate social responsibility.	8.70%	30.40%	13.00%	26.10%	0.00%	21.70%
We currently look for new students whose social and environmental ethics match those of the institution.	26.10%	30.40%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	43.50%
We will increasingly look to recruit new students that are socially and environmentally responsible.	34.80%	13.00%	4.30%	4.30%	0.00%	43.50%

Comments

30.40%

How far would you agree or disagree with the following statements about graduate employers?

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Tend to disagree</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Tend to agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
It will be financially rewarding for employers to be socially and environmentally responsible in the future.	0.00%	4.30%	13.00%	56.50%	26.10%	0.00%
We inform graduate applicants about employer responsibility to the local community.	8.70%	39.10%	26.10%	17.40%	0.00%	8.70%
We inform graduate applicants about employer responsibility to the environment.	13.00%	26.10%	26.10%	21.70%	0.00%	13.00%
Students increasingly consider the social and environmental values of a potential employer.	0.00%	13.00%	13.00%	56.50%	13.00%	4.30%
Employers will increasingly look to employ recent graduates that are socially and environmentally responsible.	0.00%	26.10%	17.40%	34.80%	0.00%	21.70%
Universities should do more to prepare students for working with employers who are socially and environmentally responsible.	0.00%	0.00%	13.00%	60.90%	21.70%	4.30%

Comments

17.40%

The following are competencies that specifically relate to environmental and social responsibility. How far do you disagree or agree that employers consider them when selecting recent graduates for staff posts?

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Tend to disagree</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Tend to agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Analyse using many disciplines	0.00%	8.70%	17.40%	69.60%	4.30%
Judge using precaution as well as scientific evidence	0.00%	21.70%	34.80%	39.10%	4.30%
Act as a responsible citizen locally and globally	4.30%	26.10%	13.00%	56.50%	0.00%
Plan for the long term as well as the short term	0.00%	13.00%	8.70%	73.90%	4.30%
Use resources efficiently	0.00%	8.70%	17.40%	65.20%	8.70%
Think of the whole system and the links	0.00%	13.00%	17.40%	60.90%	8.70%

What level of competency do you feel recent graduates currently have in the following?

	<i>Not competent</i>	<i>Fairly competent</i>	<i>Largely competent</i>	<i>Completely competent</i>
Analyse using many disciplines	34.80%	52.20%	13.00%	0.00%
Judge using precaution as well as scientific evidence	26.10%	65.20%	8.70%	0.00%
Act as a globally responsible citizen locally and globally	21.70%	60.90%	17.40%	0.00%
Plan for the long term as well as the short term	43.50%	47.80%	8.70%	0.00%
Use resources efficiently	17.40%	69.60%	13.00%	0.00%
Think of the whole system and the links	39.10%	60.90%	0.00%	0.00%

How important is it that these competencies are developed through university education?

	<i>Not important</i>	<i>Quite important</i>	<i>Very important</i>
Analyse using many disciplines	0.00%	8.70%	43.50%
Judge using precaution as well as scientific evidence	0.00%	26.10%	21.70%
Act as a globally responsible citizen locally and globally	0.00%	17.40%	26.10%
Plan for the long term as well as the short term	0.00%	0.00%	43.50%
Use resources efficiently	0.00%	13.00%	39.10%
Think of the whole system and the links	0.00%	0.00%	43.50%

Comments

21.70%

Does your institution do any of the following?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Recycle	0.00%	4.30%	30.40%	52.20%	13.00%	0.00%
Support a charity	0.00%	0.00%	30.40%	34.80%	21.70%	13.00%
Support employee volunteer work	4.30%	0.00%	17.40%	34.80%	34.80%	8.70%
Support the use of public transport	0.00%	8.70%	21.70%	30.40%	30.40%	8.70%
Invest ethically	0.00%	4.30%	4.30%	8.70%	0.00%	82.60%
Buy locally	0.00%	4.30%	13.00%	13.00%	4.30%	65.20%
Conserve energy	4.30%	21.70%	39.10%	17.40%	4.30%	13.00%
Buy environmentally-friendly products	0.00%	17.40%	30.40%	8.70%	0.00%	43.50%

How often would you expect a student or recent graduate to do the following?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
Recycle	0.00%	4.30%	43.50%	43.50%	8.70%
Support a charity	0.00%	13.00%	47.80%	34.80%	4.30%
Volunteer work	0.00%	13.00%	56.50%	26.10%	4.30%
Use public transport	0.00%	4.30%	39.10%	47.80%	8.70%
Invest ethically	13.00%	47.80%	26.10%	8.70%	4.30%
Buy locally	0.00%	17.40%	47.80%	30.40%	4.30%
Conserve energy	0.00%	8.70%	69.60%	13.00%	8.70%
Buy environmentally-friendly products	0.00%	17.40%	69.60%	13.00%	0.00%

Comments

34.80%

How much, if anything, did you know about the following before completing this questionnaire?

	<i>A great deal</i>	<i>A fair amount</i>	<i>Not very much</i>	<i>Nothing at all</i>	<i>I'd never heard of it</i>
Corporate Social Responsibility	4.30%	47.80%	43.50%	4.30%	0.00%
Sustainable Development	4.30%	47.80%	47.80%	0.00%	0.00%

Useful Resources

- Action Research for Change towards Sustainability (ACTS) Team. 2004. *Action Research for Change towards Sustainability: Change in Curricula and Graduate Skills towards Sustainability*. An Australian Department for Education & Heritage Report [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.deh.gov.au/education/publications/acts.html>>
- Agombar, J. 2004. *The Work of NUS Services' Ethical and Environmental Committee in Greening the Student Supply Chain* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://neupg.procureweb.ac.uk/environment/SustainablePurchasingForUniversities-EAUC.pdf>>
- AIESEC International. 2005. *Youth Opinion on World Issues* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.aiesec.org/website/Survey-results.pdf>>
- Balch, O. 2004. *Companies' Ethical Reports Branded Ineffective* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/ethicalbusiness/story/0,,1341673,00.html>>
- Burrows, G. 2005. So, What Is an Ethical Career? *Ethical Careers Guide 2005/2006*. London: ngo.media ltd, pp.2-3
- Business in the Community. 2003. *The Business Case for Corporate Responsibility* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.bitc.org.uk/document.rm?id=5253>>
- Business in the Community. 2003. *Responsibility: Driving Innovation, Inspiring Employees*. London: FastForward Research.
- Business in the Community. 2004. *The CommunityMark* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <[http://www.bitc.org.uk/take action/in the community community investment/measuring and reporting/](http://www.bitc.org.uk/take%20action/in%20the%20community%20community%20investment/measuring%20and%20reporting/)>
- Business in the Community. 2004. *Environment Index 2004 Report* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.bitc.org.uk/document.rm?id=4428>>
- Business in the Community. 2006. *Students Learn that Corporate Social Responsibility Is Just the Business* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.bitc.org.uk/resources/case_studies/students_learn.html>
- Cade, A. and Tennant, I. 2006. Graduate Employability for Sustainability. *The Environmentalist*. **2006** (April)
- Chime Communications plc. 2007. *Our Environment, Our Communities, Our People* [online]. [Accessed 4th February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.chime.plc.uk/downloads/CR-Report-2007.pdf>>
- CIPD. 2003. *Corporate Social Responsibility and HR's Role* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/corpstrtgy/corpsocres/csrandhr.htm>>
- CIPD. 2006. *Making CSR Happen: the Contribution of People Management* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/corpstrtgy/corpsocres/_mknqcsrhp.htm?IsSrchRes=1>
- Corporate Citizenship. 2003. *Good Companies, Better Employees* [online]. [Accessed 3rd February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.corporate-citizenship.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2008/01/hr3_final.pdf>
- CSR Academy. 2004. *The CSR Competency Framework* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.bitc.org.uk/resources/training/csr_academy/csr_acad_pubs.html>

- CSR Wire. 2003. *Students Think There Should Be More CSR Taught at Universities* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://csrwire.com/PressRelease.php?id=1884>>
- CTN Communications. 2004. *CSR Online Survey* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://213.219.8.102/pdfs/csr-survey/2004/fortune100.pdf>>
- Dawkins, J. 2005. *Employees' attitudes to corporate responsibility* [online]. [Accessed 2nd December 2005]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.bitc.org.uk/research/index.html>>
- de Geus, A. 1988. Planning as Learning. *Harvard Business Review*. **1988** (March-April), pp.70-47
- East, J. 2005. *Saying No to Dirty Work* [online]. [Accessed 30th January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20050616/ai_n14669435>
- Ethical Consumer Information Systems Limited. 2006. *Corporate Critic* [online]. [Accessed 3rd February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.corporatecritic.org>>
- Forum for the Future. 2004. *Sustainability Literacy: Knowledge and Skills for the Future*. Workshop attended in London in July 2004
- Graduate Prospects. 2006. *Prospects Directory 2006*. Manchester: Graduate Prospects
- Graduate Recruiter. 2006. CSR: the Competitive Advantage? *Graduate Recruiter*. **2006** (April)
- Grayson, D. 2005. *Responsible Business: CSR and Small Firms* [online]. [Accessed 1st February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.davidgrayson.net/display_whats_new?id=1899>
- High Fliers Research Ltd. 2008. *The UK Graduate Careers Survey 2008* [online]. [Accessed 4th February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.highfliers.co.uk/download/survey08.pdf>>
- Higher Education Academy. 2005. *Employability and Enterprise* [online]. [Accessed 3rd February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/employability>>
- Higher Education Academy. 2006. *Sustainable Development in Higher Education: Current Practice and Future Developments – A Progress Report for Employers, Unions and the Professions* [online]. [Accessed 1st February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/resourcedatabase/id586_sustainable%20development_employers_report.pdf>
- Higher Education Academy. 2006. *Sustainable Development in Higher Education: Current Practice and Future Developments – A Progress Report for Senior Managers in Higher Education* [online]. [Accessed 1st February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/resourcedatabase/id587_sustainable_development_managers_report.pdf>
- Higher Education Academy. 2006. *Learning for Sustainable Futures*. Workshop attended in Liverpool on 23rd–24th March 2006
- Higher Education Statistics Agency. 2005. *Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education in the United Kingdom for the Academic Year 2003/04*. Cheltenham: Higher Education Statistics Agency
- Idle, T. 2006. Editorial. *Environment Business*. **2006** (April)
- Ipsos MORI. 2003. *Ethical Companies* [online]. [Accessed 31st January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.mori.com/polls/2003/mori-csr.shtml>>
- Jones, H. 2005. *Is Corporate Social Responsibility Important to You?* [online]. [Accessed 31st January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.milkround.com/s4/jobseekers/news/general/editorial_display.asp?newsid=5100&from=1>

- Kramer M., Pfitzer, M., and Lee, P. 2005. *Competitive Social Responsibility*. Boston: Foundation Strategy Group & Center for Business and Government, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University
- Maestri, E., Larsen, K., Chlebik, R., Fetting, J., and Maarleveld, P. 2001. *Labour Market Project Final Report: An Analysis of the Environmental Labour Market in Five European Countries* [online]. [Accessed 4th February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://essence.vsnu.nl/servlet/nl.gx.vsnu.client.http.GetFile?id=21453>>
- Matthews, V. 2004. *Care in the Business Community* [online]. [Accessed 31st January 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.independent.co.uk/student/postgraduate/care-in-the-business-community-553945.htm>>
- Robinson, S. 2005. *Ethics and Employability*. York: Higher Education Academy
- Senge, P. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organisation*. London: Century Business
- Short, Z. 2006. *Moral maze* [online]. [Accessed 3rd February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://education.guardian.co.uk/students/graduation/story/0,,1680967,00.html>>
- Smith, H. 2001. *Briefings on Employability 1: Issues for Employers*. York: Higher Education Academy
- Universum. 2007. *Graduate Survey 2005 - UK Edition* [online]. [Accessed 3rd February 2008]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.universumeurope.com/ukgs2005.aspx>>
- Zadek, S. 2001. *The Civil Corporation: The New Economy of Corporate Citizenship*. London: Earthscan