



EQUAL GUIDELINES ON SUSTAINABILITY

Preamble:

The European Quality Link (EQUAL) is a network of networks and its mission is to act as a think tank and policy development organisation in European and international business and management education, training, research and development.

EQUAL was founded on European roots and therefore its perspective is based on the principles of subsidiarity and co-operation. In the spirit of a network organisation operating in the area of cultural diversity, EQUAL sees its key role as promoting continuous improvement through the exchange of information on best practice with the active support of agencies in the field of quality assessment, accreditation and business and management education.

These Guidelines have been developed with the primary purpose of facilitating accreditation agencies in the business and management field to include Sustainability as an essential component within their own criteria and processes for the benefit of member business schools, students, end users and society at large.

Definition of terms

For the purposes of these Guidelines:

'Sustainability' is defined as: 'forms of progress that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.' (World/Brundtland Commission on Environment & Development, 1987).

Rationale for having Guidelines on Sustainability

Sustainability has three important and inter-related components. These are: environmental, economic and social and they are important at all levels from the individual, local, national, international to fully global levels.



There exists almost universal agreement among the international scientific community that humankind's collective actions are contributing to increasing greenhouse gas emissions, global warming and climate change.

The Stern Review in 2006 highlighted the risks of global warming and climate change on the world economy and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has produced extensive evidence of widespread natural resource depletion including: oil, water, food and forests combined with a general decline in biodiversity. There is also rapid degradation in the marine environment, combined with melting ice-caps and glaciers linked to sea-level rises. All of which have significant economic and social consequences.

Many governments are signing up to demanding targets on climate change and increasing their own legal/regulatory/compliance requirements in moving towards low carbon economies. This has huge significance for individuals, managers and organisations of all kinds in terms of measuring and reducing carbon footprints and improving energy efficiency all along the supply chain, including: purchasing, transport, logistics, manufacture and retailing.

It is also important to make reference to the business case for change with regard to sustainability in terms of leadership and management in the corporate world and elsewhere on the grounds that companies are key contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, they will be affected substantially by changing regulatory requirements, they face significant operational risks from climate change and improving on sustainability represents new technical and business opportunities and beneficial innovations.

There is currently considerable global financial instability, widespread economic decline and unprecedented levels of world debt and poverty. These represent huge global challenges, yet at the same time, the opportunity to re-consider our current financial, economic and social models in relation to business and management practice and also to business and management education and development. The UN Global Compact/EFMD Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative (GRLI) and the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) can act as key reference points for business schools in relation to these Guidelines.

Given all of the above factors, it is highly desirable that business schools contribute and are seen to be contributing to improved sustainability in three main ways. These are: firstly, in the area of student learning, teaching and assessment; secondly, in the field of research and consultancy and thirdly, as organisations in their own right with regard to improving their own sustainability practice and performance.

Expectations on Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Sustainability is relevant to all of the components of current business and management education and at Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral levels and Executive education. It is directly relevant to preparing students for employment and also for those practicing managers and Executives already in corporations and other organisations.

Given the above, business and management education providers are encouraged to:

- Provide a broad base of appropriate teaching expertise and create student learning outcomes which cover the environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainability across their range of programmes in a planned and holistic manner.
- Provide appropriate learning opportunities for students to gain knowledge, understanding and to develop appropriate values, skills, abilities and attitudes in relation to these learning outcomes on sustainability.
- Assess students in ways which demonstrate that the specified learning outcomes on sustainability have been achieved.

Expectations on Research & Consultancy

Business and management research and consultancy providers are encouraged to:

- Conduct research and create outputs which relate directly to sustainability.
- Create forms of research that are sufficiently inter/multi-disciplinary in scope to address the issue of sustainability.
- Provide consultancy which is fully informed by leading-edge thinking and practice in relation to sustainability.

Expectations on Organisational Behaviour and Practice

Business and management education providers are encouraged to:

- Include sustainability as an important component within their own organisation's mission, vision, values and strategy.

- Have clear and public policies to cover their own environmental, economic and social impacts.
- Create and implement a range of metrics on their own sustainability practice and performance.
- Demonstrate commitment to and provide evidence of meeting relevant environmental targets in line with the overall requirement (base year 1990) for at least 20% reduction on greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, 80% by 2050 and to have the strategic aim to become fully carbon-neutral.

EQUAL Members

AACSB International - The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business

ABS - Association of Business Schools

AEDE - Asociación Española de Escuelas de Dirección de Empresa

ASFOR - Associazione Italiana per la Formazione Manageriale

Association of IAE's

BMDA - Baltic Management Development Association

CAMBAS - Czech Association of MBA Schools

CEEMAN - Central and East European Management Development Association

CFBSD - Canadian Federation of Business School Deans

Chapitre des Ecoles de Management- Conférence des Grandes Ecoles

Civilekonomerna - The Swedish Association of Graduates in Business Administration and Economics

Danish Business Economists

EFMD - European Foundation For Management Development

FNEGE - La Fondation Nationale pour l'Enseignement de la Gestion des Entreprises

FORUM - Association of Management Education

GMAC® - Graduate Management Admission Council®

Siviløkonomene - Norwegian Association of Masters of Science in Business

RABE - Russian Association of Business Education

SEFE - The Finnish Association of Business School Graduates

VSNU - Vereniging van Samenwerkende Nederlandse Universiteiten

For more information, please contact the EQUAL Secretariat (Emmanuelle Duval) at EFMD:
rue Gachard 88, box 3, B-1050 Brussels, tel. +32-2-6290810, fax +32-2-6290811
e-mail: emmanuelle.duval@efmd.org