

# RESPONSIBLE FUTURES CASE STUDY: WORCESTER STUDENTS' UNION & UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER, COVENTRY UNIVERSITY AND STUDENTS' UNION

## Responsible Futures' Student-led Reciprocal Audit

**Related Responsible Futures Criteria:**  
OU002, OU005

### Overview of initiative/action

Since the very first pilot (2014) of Responsible Futures, the Worcester partnership has embedded the principle of reciprocal audits into our work.

Why? We learnt from piloting another programme (EcoCampus) the value in learning directly from another University in 2008 and wanted very much to bring this powerful learning opportunity into RF.

### Impact of initiative

Students - The key benefit in a reciprocal audit for students is that looking at another institution helps them to contextualise what is going on in their own university, which sometimes is not high on their radar. They often say 'oh I did not know we did that - we

need to shout about it more.' An audit helps them see the great things going on but also in looking at another university ideas' we are stimulated in terms of what we might do next. Through the audit, students develop good skills in reflecting on the different ways universities do things, and in trying to articulate to other how things work.

It was obvious from day one that the students were the primary benefactors from this approach to Responsible Futures audits. The pleasure and value the Coventry students exhibited in their faces and body language said it all. Yes, they had visited other universities, but this was way back when they were deciding which course to do; through the reciprocal audit they were viewing the campus from a very different perspective. They were now experienced students, they knew what they were looking for in a 'good' facilities and teaching looked like which provided them with a different experience of visiting a new campus. Most of all whilst jointly being trained, students could share their own different experiences, and consider the implications from two different perspectives at the same time. It was also great fun getting to 'nose around' another university and SU in a position of power and compare it to your own.

Staff - The reciprocal audit helps to build/cement long-standing partnerships and collaborations with other institutions - sharing practice. The SU staff in both institutions had very different day to day issues priorities at the time of the first audit and found the opportunity to step back and listen and learn from each other very therapeutic. Many stories were swapped along with promises of sharing what had worked well and what hadn't. The University staff were privileged in already having well established joint working but nevertheless there is always something new to gain from looking in depth at another

institutions approach taking their great ideas and adding your own spin to it.

## Role that RF criteria/programme has played in this initiative

The way Responsible Futures is structured around formal, informal, subliminal learning lends itself beautifully to this reciprocal learning approach. There are so many areas where 'good ideas' can be shared. The physical visit to another campus, the chance to be trained and learn from different disciplines and level of study and people's personal experiences.

Over the course of each RF audit we have tinkered with the collaboration model does everyone get trained in the same institution, how many days are both teams together and where? Covid gave us the opportunity to do more online which helped with some logistics. But the value of visiting another institution shouldn't be underestimated

The Responsible Futures Criteria:

- **OU002** - Within the last two years, the Partnership has proactively engaged one or more students' union or educational institution on the issues related to Responsible Futures.
- **OU005** - Within the last two years, the Partnership has sought out opportunities to learn from a range of educational institutions on how to progress sustainability in learning.

***"It is a logistical nightmare to organise. Making sure you have students', minibuses and drivers, venues, and staff available in both partnerships so do be warned but trust us it is worth it".***



2018 AUDIT



SUSTAINABLE LUNCH DURING THE AUDIT



2022 AUDIT