

# An introduction to LiFE

LiFE is a planning and self-assessment tool specifically for colleges and universities to improve social responsibility and environmental performance through a whole institution approach. LiFE systematically guides you through the design, planning and delivery of your strategic sustainability activities.

To better support our Members, the EAUC has taken the significant decision to give free Member access to LiFE. This means that our Members now have direct access to this powerful tool which has the potential to dramatically empower them to transform the profile and reach of sustainability throughout their institutions. This is a game-changer!

[www.eauc.org.uk/life](http://www.eauc.org.uk/life)

## WHY WAS LiFE DEVELOPED?

Learning in Future Environments (LiFE) was developed in response to a growing need to embed social and environmental responsibility into all of the activities at universities and colleges. This has been set against a backdrop of economic challenges facing the sector, which include an increased need to demonstrate how they are delivering value.

In these financially constrained times, helping our Members to improve their sustainability performance is too important to be based on affordability so we have taken the significant step to simply give the powerful performance improvement tool to our Members as a core EAUC Member benefit.

We're sure that whatever the approach to your environmental and social responsibility performance, LiFE will celebrate and enhance it, rather than compromise or prescribe.

## WHAT IS LiFE?

LiFE is a **planning and self-assessment tool** – a simple but powerful spreadsheet which enables institutional planning, self-assessment, management and improvement.

The tool is challenging but we've worked hard to ensure it's intuitive, easy to access and user-friendly with automatically generated tables and dashboards. Based entirely in excel, download the tool, read the guidance and you're ready to go.

There are 2 versions of the tool to recognise the difference between Higher and Further education institutions when it comes to Research.

All EAUC resources and events have been aligned to the LiFE Frameworks. This support, through a common language throughout all aspects of Membership, provides a comprehensive **support package**, designed to help you get the most value from participating in LiFE.

In mid 2015, institutions will have the option to go for **Accreditation**. This provides you with independent assessment and verification of your performance compared to your own self-assessment. If you choose to, this can be used to publicly and positively promote your achievements and benchmark your success, both nationally and internationally. This option will carry a fee.

## WHY LiFE?

LiFE is a simple tool that will bring direct benefits to your institution. These benefits include the ability to:

- Go beyond environmental performance to evaluate wider social sustainability
- Actively manage and improve your environmental and social responsibility performance by setting targets and monitoring your progress
- Engage with colleagues beyond the sustainability champions/estates and students - use it to engage your Senior Management Team
- Use LiFE to complement other activity e.g. an environmental management system, the Flexible Framework or the Green League. There is no extra work and it can provide your institution with a central view as it offers a dashboard to pull everything together
- Engage with a community of participants through EAUC Membership, which will help you to share ideas and good practice.

## HOW IT WORKS

We've focused on making a tool that will be easy-to-use and will bring direct benefit to every area of your institution.

If you use the LiFE Self-Assessment tool in its entirety, it stimulates performance improvement across 4 **Priority Areas**. These have been developed to accurately reflect specific challenges that face the tertiary education sector.

Within each of these Priority Areas are 14 **Frameworks** that help you to review your current social responsibility and environmental activities, whilst helping to guide your future strategic planning in a simple, systematic and proactive way.

**Tip:** Use the diagram above right as an engagement tool to demonstrate what should be included in a 'whole institution' approach to sustainability.

<b>Leadership and Governance</b>	<b>Partnership and Engagement</b>
Leadership Staff Engagement and Human Resources	Community and Public Engagement Business and Industry Interface Procurement and Supplier Engagement
<b>Estates and Operations</b>	<b>Learning, Teaching and Research</b>
Biodiversity Sustainable ICT Utilities Travel and Transport Sustainable Construction and Renovation Resource Efficiency and Waste	Learning and Teaching Research* Student Engagement

## USING THE TOOL

Simply work your way through the Framework(s) in the tool by adding evidence of existing activity in the 8 **Activity Areas** and then give yourself a score. We have provided helpful scoring guidance to ensure you are consistent and realistic.

### Tips

- Tailor your approach - take one Priority Area or Framework at a time or facilitate a truly 'whole-institution' approach
- Take your time - there are no deadlines, no rules. Simply use the tool your own way and only set timescales when you're ready and to fit into wider plans
- Start your journey with LiFE - if you're just starting out, LiFE can help you to build momentum giving you a clear path to progress

## ANNUAL REVIEW

To know where support is needed, we will ask you to submit the completed tool to us annually. No form filling, no extra work, just pop it in an email.

We will use the combined information confidentially to guide our services over the coming year and provide the sector with some useful insight.

\*The Research Framework only applies to the Higher Education (research-based institutions) version of the tool.