



Green Gown Awards Australasia

Learning, Teaching & Skills

2020 Case Study



Griffith Business School

Immersing students in sustainable business management through beer, fashion, surfing, and gardening

Griffith Business School (GBS) understands the importance of combining our formal education with more informal, short-term opportunities that provide students a solid foundation for sustainable business practices.

Every year, through the Griffith Centre for Sustainable Enterprise (GCSE) and in collaboration with Griffith University's International Business Development Unit (IBDU), GBS and the GCSE offer a two or three-week study-holiday program on sustainable enterprise to international students. Since 2016, we have offered this program to Kyung Hee University in South Korea. In 2019, we extended the program to Yokohama National University, Japan.

Through the program, students are immersed in the theme of sustainable enterprise within different business contexts. The topics students learn embedded the SDGs into their teaching and include leadership for sustainable business, sustainable tourism practice, responsible investment, sustainable and social marketing, among others. These topics are taught through lectures from academics, business leaders and guest speakers. Further to this, the program also offers site visits to organisations that are embedding sustainability into the core of their operations. From fast fashion, to zoos that are making a difference, to sustainable beer brewing, students engage with industry to gather first-hand insights into operating businesses for good.

These site visits allow students to see, first-hand, how the theory of sustainability is translated into practice. The program also incorporates fun, holiday-type activities to complement the academic component. These activities are usually organised within the context of sustainable tourism, allowing students the opportunity to experience Australia in a fun and active learning environment.

Finally, the program culminates with students creating an ePortfolio where they are asked to reflect on what is sustainability and why it is important in business; what their three main takeaways and lessons from this program are; how they will apply these lessons in the future in their personal and professional life; and share a brief summary of their experience in Australia. Each student presents their ePortfolio with other students in the program.

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Environmental & Social Benefits

The program has resulted in the following benefits:

- | Financial revenue generated for GBS and IBDU that allows us to expand our reach and create future programs that benefit students across Asia-Pacific.

- | Complementing our formal educational programs with a more interactive and engaging program that continues to strengthen and expand knowledge of the SDGs.

- | Educating international students on sustainable business, many of whom had not been exposed to this topic in the past.

- | Demonstrating how businesses in the 'real-world' are incorporating sustainability into their operations. For example, students learn about sustainability within different business contexts by participating in site visits to several businesses and destinations. These have included Australia Zoo, Riverlife, Southbank Parklands, Australia Kayaking Adventure, Moreton Island, Stone and Wood, community gardens and Surf Clubs that are accredited by the Surfrider Foundation.

- | Promoting local businesses who are committed to sustainability to an international market.

Allowing students to engage with sustainability not only in an educational way, but to connect with industry and to gain first-hand insights into sustainable business operations, including businesses who have been awarded B-Corp certification (e.g. Stone & Wood).

This engagement **enhances student learning with practical education and strengthens ties within the local communities** that Griffith operates in by supporting and showcasing businesses that focus on sustainability.

- | For us, the most rewarding benefit was seeing how students took up the message of sustainability and returned to their home countries with a desire to be an agent of change. The below testimonial is a testament to that:

“The most important take-home message from the program is that sustainability is our collective responsibility. It is essential for different parties, such as consumers, businesses and governments, to work hand-in-hand in advancing sustainability. Indeed, business has an influential role in achieving sustainability. Earning money is no longer the only goal for doing business; cooperating and social responsibility is also quite important. Staying in Australia for almost a month, I can see there are lots of public facilities, businesses and behaviours contributing to sustainability. The experience not only motivated myself to live greener but also encouraged me to put in thought how businesses can make a better planet. Do not underestimate our own ability, our tiny actions will have a huge impact on the environment.”





Wider Societal Impact

Global Relationships with Educational Value

The program significantly improves global relationships, welcoming students from South Korea and Japan to come study at an Australian university and be immersed in Australian culture through various site visits and interaction with Australian educators. Furthermore, it offers the educators involved in the program an opportunity to further their cross-cultural teaching skills, enhancing their ability to provide culturally appropriate and relevant teaching to more international students in the future.

Enhancing community ties and knowledge share

The program deepens ties within the local community in South East Queensland by fostering relationships between local businesses and international students and education, through knowledge share. Local providers have the opportunity to share their business with eager learners and be celebrated for their practices.

Leadership & Engagement

Our proposal is distinctive because it:

- | Incorporates sustainability and the SDGs as a guiding framework to underpin the program's curriculum and its delivery.
 - | Integrates interactive assessments without being assessable. Further, these assessments are available to students as a digital portfolio to be used in the future, which contributes to student employability.
 - | Combines both academic theory with hands-on practice from case studies in the 'real-world' of business.
 - | Builds and nurtures connections with industry.
 - | Engages and involves a wide range of academics from different fields to offer a multidisciplinary program.
- Integrates fun, 'holiday-type' activities to complement student learning. This helps the offering be more than an educational program, as it allows students the time and opportunity to travel within Australia. From student feedback, it was clear that this was an attractive component of the program. We also ensure that these 'holiday-type' activities incorporate a sustainable business component. For example, this year, students visited Australia Zoo, where they learned about sustainable tourism in a 20-minute lecture and then had the remaining day to see these practices in action at the zoo's facilities.

Top 3 Learnings

There is international and domestic demand for short-term programs that expand students' knowledge in the area of sustainable business management

There is strength in numbers: by pooling academic staff knowledge and skills from varying fields, we can create innovative and multidisciplinary programs that complement our degrees

There are opportunities to build productive partnerships and collaborations between universities in the Asia-Pacific region to expand knowledge of the SDGs