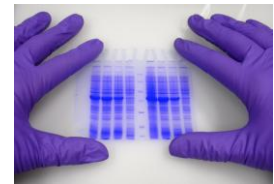


Ethics Audit Tool, incorporating Sustainability



What is an Audit Tool?

An audit tool is a good way to initiate discussion and development on an issue. It enables you to make clear the range of activities which may contribute to the issue and the process can reassure colleagues that quite a lot of work may already be developed in the area. The process can also recognise local autonomy and priorities, within an institutional frame-work, and can:

- encourage development of a strategic plan to clarify how ethics and sustainability can be developed in relation to a particular discipline;
- identify how far and in what area development should take place; and
- give recognition to existing activity which contributes effectively.

However an audit tool also serves broader purposes:

- raising awareness by staff of practice in general and of the institution's plans;
- revealing or clarifying links between the aspect being audited and plans and strategies in other areas;
- engaging a wider constituency within the academic community; and
- facilitating dialogue and development within and between teaching units.

The purpose of this Audit is **developmental**, not simply to come up with an overall score for the programme. It is designed to help teachers **consider** the content and design of a programme of learning with respect to the **relevant ethical issues** appropriate to the discipline and the issue of sustainability (i.e. use of renewable resources) and to see where they could improve the programme of study to better address these issues.

The Ethics Audit Tool can be downloaded from the Centre's website:
www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/audit.aspx

The Ethics Audit Tool can be changed to suit your requirements. This audit tool was last updated in December 2011



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How to use the Ethics Audit Tool

The audit should be carried out with respect to the totality of provision within a course. The numeric scoring system allows for the situation where an issue might be addressed but only superficially or at the wrong time. Only score 4 if you believe the course optimally deals with the audit point.

In the various aspects of ethics score 0-4 for **each** of the audit points depending on how closely you believe these audit points are **optimally** achieved in the course being audited.

- Score 0 if the audit point has not been seriously considered at all.
- Score 1-4 if the audit point has been considered but reflection indicates it is
 - poorly (1);
 - partially (2);
 - adequately (3); or
 - optimally (4) satisfied.

Make a subjective judgement and score accordingly. Think about it from the student's point of view as well as that of the course team.

Having completed the ethics audit you should analyse each of the audit points with a score of 2 or less:

- i) What possible options could be envisaged which would satisfy the audit point?
- ii) Do resource or other constraints make any of these options unrealistic?
- iii) At what point in the course could appropriate changes be made?
- iv) Which changes would most benefit ethical aspects of the course?
- v) Can a realistic action plan be formulated to introduce these changes into the course before the next intake of students?

Are there potential **quick wins**? There may be something that you or your colleagues could do very easily that would not cost a lot in terms of resources or time.

Are there changes that require **longer term planning**? Does the change require agreement of others / resource allocation / time to implement?

Collect all your action points into the **action plan** at the back of the audit tool.

Having instituted changes as a result of the Audit the process should be repeated in 12-24 months.

You may also be interested in:

Teaching Ethics to Bioscience Students webpages:

www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/network/ethicsig.aspx

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) webpages:

www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/esd/

Other Audit Tools available from the Centre including Assessment and Work Related Learning: www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/audit.aspx



1. Identification of ethical issues

	Score
Have the course team considered what ethical / sustainability issues exist within the discipline area of the programme?	
Has the course team taken decisions as to which ethical / sustainability issues should be addressed within the programme?	
Has the course team considered when these ethical issues are best dealt with over the duration of the programme?	
Was this consideration made in the light of the progressing emotional maturity of the students?	
Was this consideration made in the light of the sequencing of the rest of the academic content of the programme?	
Has the team successfully negotiated the incorporation / integration and crediting of these ethical elements in the appropriate teaching modules / elements?	
Have academic staff outside the programme team had the opportunity to input on the nature of ethical areas which should be addressed within the programme?	
Have recent graduates had the opportunity to input on the nature of ethical areas which should be addressed within the programme?	
Have employers had the opportunity to input on the nature of ethical areas which should be addressed within the programme?	
Has the department / school of philosophy / ethics within the institution had the opportunity of comment of the ethical content of the programme?	
Are ethical issues both within and outside the discipline addressed?	
Is sustainability addressed as an ethical issue?	

2. Development of theoretical ethics framework

	Score
Are students provided with an ethical frame of reference and theoretical underpinning in which to think about ethical issues?	
Are students provided with teaching on key ethical theories (e.g. consequentialism, deontology, virtue theory)?	
Is this framework provided to all students irrespective of their module choices?	
Are students provided with / enabled to develop an ethical framework around bioscience?	

2. Development of theoretical ethics framework (cont.)

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	Score
Is the ethics framework underpinned by discipline appropriate examples and illustrations?	
Is consideration given to the impact of the development of a formal ethical framework on the student's personal beliefs?	
Are students enabled to set their established beliefs within their new ethics framework?	
Is support provided to students who find conflicts between their new ethical framework and their existing beliefs?	

3. Sustainability aspects

	Score
Early in the programme do students develop an understanding of what 'sustainability' involves?	
Are opportunities provided for generic aspects of sustainability to be addressed (e.g. efficient use of electricity, water and transport)?	
Are opportunities provided for discipline-specific aspects of sustainability to be addressed?	
Does work involving aspects of sustainability contribute proportionally to module marks / grades?	
Are sustainability issues integrated into opportunities to acquire / practice generic and discipline-specific skills?	
Are there processes in place to enable students to link aspects of sustainability presented in the curriculum with their extra-curricula activities?	

4. Involvement of employers

	Score
Have potential employers made students aware of the ethical issues employers face?	
Do you have good communications with regard to ethical issues with local and national major employers of your graduates?	
Do employers visit your department to give talks about ethical issues they encounter in everyday business?	
Are work-based scenarios and discussion topics on ethical issues available to students?	



4. Involvement of employers (cont.)

	Score
Do you know what particular ethical issues your major employers see as becoming more important in the next 4 years?	
Have employers provided examples of their public and internal statements / policies concerning ethical issues?	

5. Integration and progression throughout course

	Score
Is there progression to more complex ethical aspects as the programme progresses?	
Do students have guidance on how to join up and accumulate their learning experiences involving ethical issues across modules and throughout the programme?	
Are students provided with encouragement and a process to help them reflect on their early exposure to ethical aspects in the light of their later development further in the programme?	
Are ethical aspects credited in module assessments?	
Are ethics aspects credited in modules in the final year of study?	
Do some students carry out in-course project work on ethical aspects?	
Is there an ethical matrix which is completed by each student to recognise each ethics element as it is encountered?	

6. Integration with skills development

	Score
Are there opportunities for students to develop...	-----
Writing skills utilising ethics materials?	
Presentation skills utilising ethics materials?	
Discussion / argument skills utilising ethics materials?	
Information retrieval / discovery skills utilising ethics materials?	



7. Incorporation of personal beliefs and experience

	Score
Is explicit account taken of differences between students' personal values and beliefs?	
Are students encouraged to discuss their personal values and beliefs?	
Is a suitable protected environment provided for these discussions to take place?	
Are students invited to share ethical dilemmas they have encountered?	
Are student's personal values and beliefs respected?	

8. Personal and emotional support

	Score
Is consideration given to the emotional consequences of discussion of some ethical issues by students?	
Are students able to opt out of particular ethical aspects of the programme without penalty?	
Are students able to discuss personal ethical issues and conflicts on a one-to-one basis with an appropriate tutor?	
Is email contact provided so students can initiate contact with tutors for personal support on a confidential basis?	

9. General

	Score
Is there an effective relationship between the course team and your philosophy / ethics unit in the university?	
Have you considered ethics in the context of ethnicity and religion?	
Have links been made with the department / school of philosophy / ethics within the institution?	



Action Plan

Make a note of the resources you will need and whose help will be required.

1.

2.

3.

4.

