

## Meet a... Engagement Manager



Caroline Overy, Engagement Manager at The University of Edinburgh

### How would you describe your job in a tweet i.e.140 characters?

I manage a team who work on projects to engage staff and students in sustainability and social responsibility at the University of Edinburgh.

### What does an average day look like?

Every day is usually different! I work roughly 9-5 Monday-Friday. Quite often I'll have meetings to plan and organise projects around energy, waste and reuse, travel, procurement, or I might be running a workshop, training session, or event, researching a topic, or writing a report or briefing.

### What are the key skills and qualifications required for your job?

While my work doesn't relate to compliance as such, it's useful to have an understanding of the national and international regulatory framework around environmental and climate policy, so I make sure I'm on relevant mailing lists, and use the EAUC Sustainability Exchange and mailing lists to keep up to date with what others in the sector are doing. I have an MSc in Environment Culture & Society, which helped me get into the sector, but I'd also done an internship in events and outreach for a small community-based environmental project, during which I learned a lot about communication, facilitation, and organisational skills.

### What training and continuous professional development do you require?

I completed an Institute of Leadership and Management Level 2 Certificate in Leadership and Team Skills, which was useful for my role in managing a five person team. I also make an effort to keep up to speed on engagement and behaviour change theory, courses, and techniques, since the role of my team is mainly focused in that area.

### What are your top three responsibilities?

- Manage and support my team members to work to our objectives.
- Work with key practitioners across the University and relevant staff and student stakeholders to design and deliver projects around key practical sustainability themes.
- Lead our Department's Sustainability Awards scheme, which gives all staff and students recognition and encouragement to get involved in sustainability at the University.

### What are the positives and negatives of the job?

The main positive of the job is definitely the people I work with – Everybody in the Department has a great attitude to getting things done, and is very supportive of each other. Another positive is the variety of projects and topics we cover, which can be anything from ethics in the supply chains of electronics through to the life cycle costing of paper towels. In terms of negatives, the University is a very large and complex organisation, so internal communication with other departments isn't always easy. Overall, the culture is positive and friendly, but everybody has challenging workloads so it can sometimes be hard to engage them in practical activity.



To help our Members understand more about the roles in further and higher education institutions, we've created a suite of career profiles. These share the main responsibilities and skills and knowledge required of many of the key roles that play a part in embedding sustainability in a tertiary education institution.

View the entire suite at [www.eauc.org.uk/meet\\_a\\_member](http://www.eauc.org.uk/meet_a_member)

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### Do you manage a budget, and what are your key priorities for this?

I manage a cash budget of around £5000 to deliver the projects that my team is committed to for the year to cover costs such as tools and resources for staff sustainability champions, catering for events and workshops, and some other materials.

### What does the path to career progression in this role look like? *What are the opportunities? What's this limited by?*

There are career development opportunities within the University in project management and other professional services roles. Within my time in the Department, I have been promoted to manage my team, but beyond this, it is unlikely I will progress upwards and keep sustainability as the core function of my role. On the other hand, the changing and broad nature of Social Responsibility & Sustainability keeps me professionally stimulated as new projects arise regularly.

### What is the minimum and maximum salary band for this role?

£31,342-37,394.

### What advice do you have for graduates and other potential candidates who are considering joining?

If you don't see something that appeals, find people to help you start something you want to do yourself. Sustainability is such a broad field and encompasses everything from small community projects to commercial consultancy, to Higher Education, and onwards, so all experience and skills will be relevant. Overall, you should choose a career that's a combination of your knowledge, skills, and, fundamentally, your passion.

### For institutions without an Engagement Manager – what 3 aspects of your role do you think are the most important for any institution's sustainability journey?

- An engaged University community is essential for sustainability to have any traction throughout the institution.
- Bringing together the different strands of sustainability and social responsibility is important to embed a holistic vision, which will lead to lasting change for the institution.
- Linking staff with students and other staff who wouldn't usually work together leads to innovation that every institution needs to tackle the challenge of sustainability.

### What department do you and your line manager sit in? Which departmental interactions are vital for your role?

Department for Social Responsibility & Sustainability. Key relationships lie within Estates (including Energy Office, Waste & Environment team, Landscape Section, Transport Office), Procurement, Finance, and College Offices, as well as Heads of School across the institution.

### What opportunities and challenges does working in a higher education institution bring?

Opportunities: Training and development is of a high standard, and you're usually able to audit academic courses if they're related to your job. As professional services staff, we also have the opportunity to embed academic learning from researchers into the operations of the institution and behave as a living laboratory.

### How do you communicate the outputs of your role to the wider institution, and what does this include?

We publish an annual report of our activities and have a committee structure around Social Responsibility & Sustainability that feeds up to University Court. We also have a website and a newsletter that people can sign up to. Our Department runs a Facebook page and Twitter account.

# EAUC sustainability CPD programme

## Meet a... Engagement Manager



### How has EAUC Membership helped you in your job and within your institution?

Useful training, webinars, and networking opportunities.

### How can other Members contact you?

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