The Audit Process

Each department needs to be audited after submitting their workbook. This provides an excellent opportunity for students or staff who want to gain new skills and boost their CV, allows the institution to spot any issues previously unknown to the department and to offer them help and support, and to identify good practice case studies. This document contains **the main stages** and a **full checklist**.

The audits and auditor training can be one of the most rewarding part of the programme, students gain a lot from the experience and the teams are given the opportunity to show off their initiatives.

The main parts of the process are:

Recruitment

If you are an off-campus organisation your Project Officer will facilitate this via local Students' Union, however within a University or College setting you will want to start to think of mechanisms for auditor recruitment at least a month in advance of the audits. The number of auditors required will depend on the number of teams you need to audit. It is ideal to have the same (or slightly higher) number of auditors as the number of teams participating. We advise that there are two individuals per audit. This adds another level of verification to each audit and gives the students someone to confer ideas. Often auditing teams can complete two audits, especially if they are bronze level, within an afternoon. Increase recruitment by:

- Highlighting that the course is IEMA approved and is a great opportunity for students to increase their employability prospects

- Working with the Students' Union to advertise and recruit auditors through their communication channels. Students' Unions get a financial incentive from the NUS for their institution being involved, so this is useful leverage if you are a university or college!

- Working with societies, clubs or volunteering groups (People & Planet and environmental groups etc) and centres at fresher's fairs and throughout the year.

Student auditors at City University London

- If Student Switch Off run at your University ask your NUS Project Officer to advertise the opportunity to their Student ambassadors and on the Switch Off Facebook page. You could always ask the residences team to also send out an email.

- Asking administrators of relevant courses (geography, business, environmental sciences etc) to email students about the opportunity.

- Linking up with specific academic departments; students then conduct the audits as part of their course assessment/coursework.

- Post news items on the website/intranet/student newsletters/staff newsletters.

- Working with careers departments or unions on integrating the training into any existing volunteering or awards schemes: your GI Project Officer will be happy to sign off hours for students.

- You may also want to offer the auditing training to staff members currently participating in Green Impact, giving them the chance to share their knowledge with other students in the training group, and the team they go to visit (they of course would not be able to audit their own team).

Preparation for Auditor Training

The Lead Environmental Contact and their GI Project Officer need to ensure certain fixtures are in place before the training can take place. This is a general preparation tick list:

- Book a suitable room (a good option is to ask your students' union) and arrange catering (in line with the GI ethos of being local and sustainable, also make sure to ask auditors if they have any dietary requirements).
- Supply some maps of campus/area
- Email all team leads to prepare them for the audits and arrange for them to be present when the audits take place
- Agree with your GI Project Officer which criteria will be audited (sometimes if workbooks have hundreds of criteria, a spot-check type of audit for Gold or Bonus works well)
- If appropriate, ask the local students' union to come along at lunch to say hi and advertise any other green volunteering opportunities or events: they are a captive audience!

Training

The training itself often works best over just one day. The NUS Green Impact team will deliver a morning session with the auditors. We are keen for the audits to be a rigorous, but essentially helpful process rather than an interrogative visit! To ensure this is the case, we train auditors in Green Impact, your criteria, what to look for and how to interact with the teams whilst auditing.

The training can be delivered in a standard teaching or meeting room which has projector computer and sound facilities, however we can

Auditor training at LSE

also offer a paperless version of the audit training which can be based in a computer lab or with laptops available. Paperless audits reduce waste, create a smoother auditing process and are easy to share once the audit has been complete. If you would like to conduct paperless audits please discuss this with your Project Officer well in advance of your training session.

If you manage a Green Impact programme across a variety of locations we may suggest having remote auditor training via an interactive webinar. Alternatively there may be the need for a mixture of in person and desktop audits in which case we would hold a training session, but some of the audits would then be desktop based followed by a telephone interview. If you think this may be appropriate for some of your more remote teams, please discuss with your project officer.

If you are an off-campus organisation why not get involved in the audit training day. For example individuals from the University of Gloucestershire, supported by the University of Gloucestershire Students' Union, audited the specialist insurance business Endsleigh. As a supplement to the standard auditor training session Endsleigh gave the students a workshop on developing their personal brand so as to assist in interview and carer preparation. This was a great addition to the day and helped the organisation feel really involved.

Audits

After the morning session, auditors go off to their specific departments to audit throughout the afternoon. It is important that a member of each GI team is present in their department to escort the auditor, and provide essential information and evidence.

After the audits, your GI Project Officer will collate the results from the students and work with the Lead Environmental Contact to liaise with any teams that may need to add to their evidence in order to meet certain criteria. This makes sure that it is not an inflexible process, but one which is responsive in situations where

evidence was lacking or criteria only narrowly missed, staff are then given the opportunity to resubmit and gain accreditation for their efforts. We will provide an auditor survey to capture the impact the experience has had on the students involved, and also importantly accredit each auditor with an electronic certificate and encourage their attendance at the awards ceremony.

Full Checklist

What You Need To Do:

- **Decide on the date of your audit**! This needs to be close enough to submission deadlines to keep momentum high, but at least six weeks away from your awards ceremony so that you have plenty of time for you to finalise team accreditations then to order awards on time! It is also worth bearing in mind student holidays, i.e. Easter and exam time, which will determine when you have auditors free and available.
- **Begin recruiting auditors** – think again about working with your students' union, as well as relevant societies and departments. Give yourself a good month or so to do this. Make sure in all communications with students you ask them to bring along a laptop so that they can undertake electronic (paperless) audits.
- **Book a suitable room** – big enough for all your auditors, but not intimidatingly spacious! Also – be sure to take all accessibility requirements into account.
- **Provide your teams with the information they need**, and make sure they know which time to expect their auditors. You may want to run a meeting on this or you can share this NUS webinar on '[Preparing for Audits](#)'.
- **Finalise an audit schedule** of all teams who have submitted, specifically when they are available, where they are based, and who the auditors will meet.
- **Book catering** for your auditors (and – if budget allows – consider inviting your teams!). Also, be sure to check any dietary requirements in advance.
- Chasing up any **further evidence** from teams who were close to fulfilling certain criteria at the time of audit.
- Never hesitate to go to your GI Project Officer if you have any problems at any point in this process!

What We Do

- Offer support throughout the whole process!
- **Provide a morning of full training for your auditors** – you can be as involved in this aspect of the process as you like. But, be assured, your GI Project Officer will deliver everything which is required.
- **Provide the electronic audit reports** – all you have to do is ensure your teams make their final workbook submissions, and we'll take care of the rest.
- **Provide feedback and results** as soon as possible, as well as help you to chasing up any further evidence from teams who were close to fulfilling certain criteria at the time of audit.
- **Provide an auditor survey** to help capture general feedback from the auditors, and help you to evidence the impact of the programme on student skills and attitudes.