

## **ISO 14001 – an Environmental Management System (EMS)**

The aim of environmental management is to eliminate, prevent or minimise damaging effects on the environment. Our EMS is a structured management tool that enables us to identify and manage our significant environmental impacts. By taking into account our main activities we can identify what the environmental impacts are in quantifiable terms and procedures and systems are in place to prevent and reduce these impacts with a formal route for reporting them to senior management. A key principle of an EMS is the ethos of 'continual environmental improvement' and this will need to be demonstrated during audits, reporting and reviews.

### **What are the standards?**

There are several standards that organisations in the UK can adopt for their EMS and one that is sector specific to FHEs. These are:

**ISO 14001** is the internationally recognised standard for EMS and has just celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an estimated 120,000 organisations achieving registration.

**Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)** is a voluntary European Union wide scheme that uses ISO 14001 as its management system. This is usually site specific and was set up for particular industry types and is generally the favoured approach adopted by Local Authorities.

**BS8555 (Acorn Scheme)** was launched by the British Standards group and administered by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). It was initially set up to help SMEs achieve ISO 14001 certification through a phased approach.

**Eco Campus** is a sector specific EMS based on BS8555 designed for FHEs and is a collaboration between HEFCE, the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges, Nottingham Trent University and Loreus Ltd (EMS, software development and training consultancy). Like the Acorn scheme it eventually leads to full ISO 14001 accreditation. There are currently 11 Universities participating in a pilot scheme.

Anglia Ruskin elected to pursue ISO 14001 and achieved full accreditation in July 2009, taking 18 months rather than the 36 months required for Acorn/Eco Campus.

While the Acorn scheme and Eco Campus have their advantages many organisations find the programme stalls once they have determined their significant impacts and set up a system to help ensure legal compliance. They can also be more expensive as each phase needs to be externally verified which adds to the costs.

The ISO series of standards covers elements such as Quality (9001), Health & Safety (OHSAS 18001) and Environmental (14001). These are internationally recognised standards that enable organisations to demonstrate that they have management systems in place that have been externally verified and passed by accredited auditors.

Certification to these standards is often demanded by customers and investors alike as it gives additional proof that the organisation in question is competent. With environmental management, energy efficiency and sustainability increasing in importance the number of organisations seeking certification to ISO 14001 is growing rapidly.

### **What are the components of an EMS?**

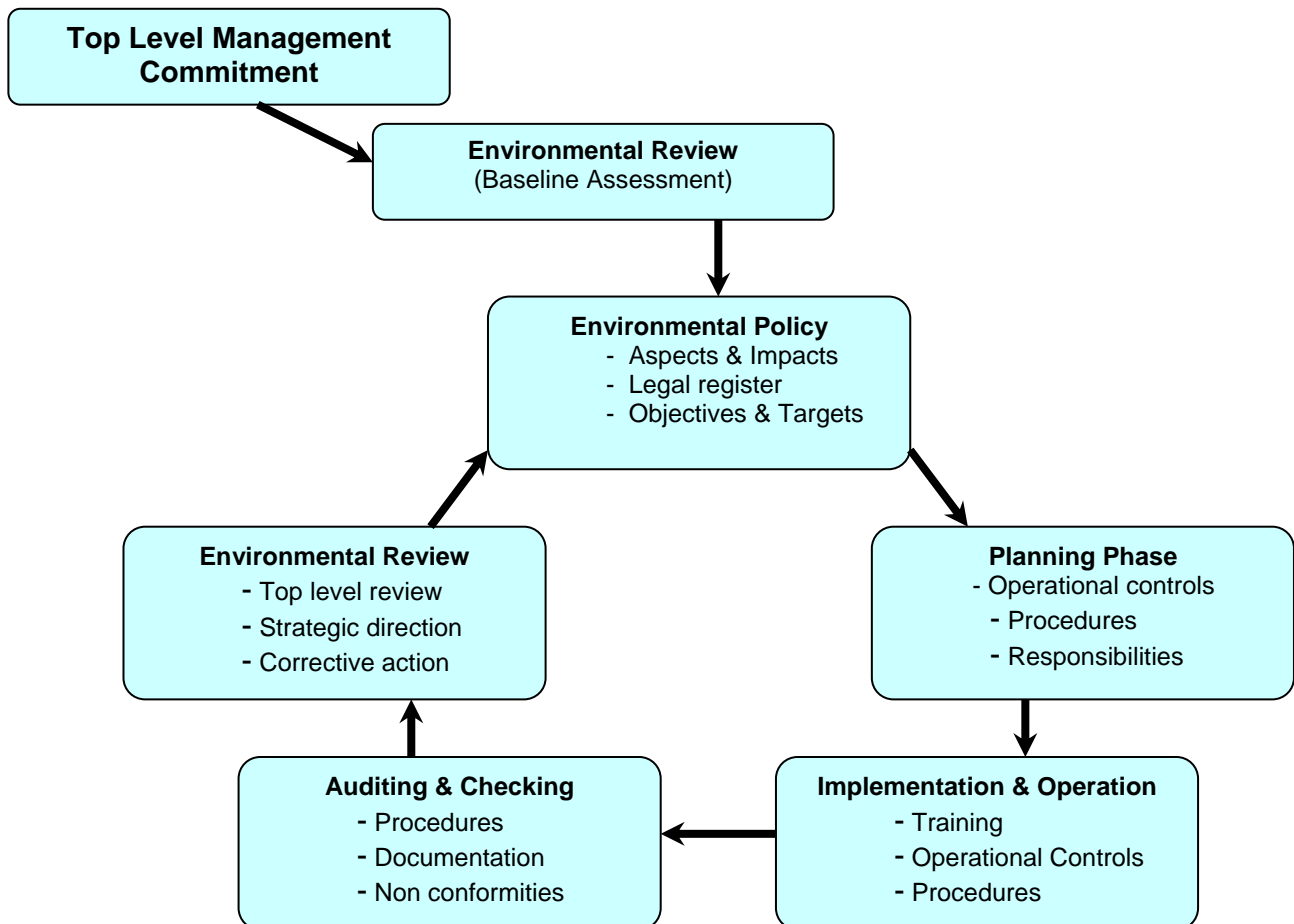
An EMS is not a small undertaking and requires the commitment of an organisation's time and money so top level commitment is essential. An initial GAP analysis and baseline environmental review will determine what systems are already in place and what the headline environmental impacts are.

In ISO 14001 it is a requirement to identify and evaluate the significance of an organisation's Aspects and Impacts. In ISO 14001 aspects refer to an organisation's activities that interact with the Environment. Once the range of activities or aspects has been identified then their relative impact, risk of occurrence and hence their significance can be determined.

From this significance evaluation the Environmental Policy can be drafted to ensure it addresses the key significant aspect and impacts. Many organisations draft an Environmental Policy without considering this and may not be addressing the most significant impacts in their policy.

The basic cycle of an EMS is shown below.

Once the environmental impacts of an organisation have been identified, policy and targets set, then the phases listed above need to be implemented. This is known as **Plan – Do – Check – Act**.



## **What can you do?**

In addition to the key personnel involved everyone at Anglia Ruskin University will have a significant role to play in the implementation and day to day management of the EMS as our support and teaching activities have a significant impact of resources through energy and water use, consumables and waste.

We are looking for environmental champions to help us raise awareness of our EMS and the environmental expectations placed on staff. We need enthusiastic individuals to help us carry this message forward, acting as a point of contact. We will be offering some training in this area so if you are interested in becoming an environmental champion then please contact the environment team.