

## Tomorrow's Sustainable Universities Conference

15 – 16 July 2010

### Workshop 2: The Role of Curriculum in Institutional Change

#### Facilitators:

**Professor Stephen Sterling (HE Academy ESD Project & University of Plymouth) and Dr Simon Smith (HE Academy ESD Project & University of Leeds)**

To date, the role of curriculum has not been at the forefront of institution-wide sustainability programmes in most universities. Yet arguably it is vital if the transition to sustainable universities is to be attained. The curriculum cannot be considered in isolation when fundamental strategic change is being considered. And without curriculum change institutions will be unable to achieve the aspiration set out by HEFCE at the beginning of the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) in 2005:

*“Our vision is that, within the next 10 years, the higher education sector in England will be recognised as a major contributor to society’s efforts to achieve sustainability – through the skills and knowledge that its graduates learn and put into practice, and through its own strategies and operations.”*

This workshop will consider a) the extent that this has been achieved through the embedding of sustainability into the curriculum during the first half of the UNDESD, and b) how progress might be accelerated.

After drawing on some of the ideas developed in the keynotes during the morning; on evidence-based documents provided in advance of the session, and on brief inputs based on the work of the Academy ESD Project and experience of the Centre for Sustainable Futures at the University of Plymouth, the facilitators will invite delegates to negotiate the areas of discussion and activity around a number of key questions:

- How far and where curriculum is currently playing a key role in embedding institution-wide sustainability in HE?
- What is the role of curriculum in a sustainable university of the future?
- How does the curriculum need to change to manifest the sustainable university?

Some areas that delegates might wish to consider include:

- The relationship between the curriculum and other areas of activity in institutions (e.g. estates, student volunteering, third-arm services)
- Strategic approaches to the curriculum (e.g. the role of inter-/ multi-disciplinarity and/ or holistic approaches)
- The drivers for change (e.g. student demand, a good business case for curriculum change, what the policy drivers are and whether these promote the right sort of change)
- The relationship between institutional change and curriculum change

We will work towards a short written output that will be circulated to all delegates after the conference.