### SESSION PLANS

**COURSE:** ABE Level 6 Business Ethics and Sustainability

**ELEMENT:** Element 3 – Implementing CSR policies

## **LEARNING OUTCOME 3**

**Critically evaluate the opportunities and challenges for a range of organisations to develop ethical business practice through Corporate Social Responsibility policies and reporting (20%)**

3.1 Critically evaluate how organisations of different types can effectively implement Corporate Social Responsibility policies and reporting procedures on triple bottom line sustainability

**NUMBER OF SESSIONS:** Two - approximately ten hours in total, plus self-study

**SESSION TOPICS:** Session 1: Benefits/drivers and Global Reporting Initiative

Session 2: Effectiveness and trends in reporting

Note to tutors: these are the recommended session outlines for learning outcome 3 of the ABE Level 6 Business Ethics and Sustainability. You should follow the plan, using the resources (referenced as ‘slides’) and activities provided. It is important to enhance all sessions with local examples and case studies, involving the learners ACTIVELY wherever possible.

### SESSION 1: Benefits/drivers and Global Reporting Initiative

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| **Approx.**  **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative assessment** |
| 4-5 hours | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | Use file: **6UBES Presentation E3**  Introduce element, learning outcome and assessment criteria | 1 - 4 |  |  |
|  | CSR and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises | Explain that principles are the same for small as large businesses, and are important to consider as collectively the impacts are significant. Less likely to be driven by regulation, reputational risk or license to operate. More likely to be driven by interests of owners to operate ethically. Might be more pressed for time and resources to invest in this area, but there are many examples of good practice | 5 | *Classroom discussion*: Instruct students to consider the typical size of organisations in a sector of their interest. How significant are SMEs? |  |
|  | Defining CSR reporting | Explain that it differs to traditional financial reporting. Focuses on identifying, measuring and communicating social, ethical and environmental impacts of organisational activities | 6 | Listen, make notes and ask questions as necessary |  |
|  | Drivers | Before showing slide 7, elicit from students why they think organisations spend time and money on engaging in CSR reporting  **Internal and external pressure**: Pressure from competitors, industry associations, governments, shareholders, consumers, unions, the media, pressure groups and so on  **Identifying risks**: Reporting procedures are helpful to identify social, ethical and environmental impacts which could present a risk to operations and/or reputation.  **Improved stakeholder management**: Reporting to stakeholders is helpful to develop good relationships and trust.  **Enhanced accountability and transparency**: Reporting helps to ensure transparency (not hiding impacts) and accountability (ensuring organisations are answerable for the consequences of actions). | 7 | *Classroom discussion*: Students brainstorm why organisations engage in CSR reporting |  |
|  | Benefits | Explain the range of internal and external benefits, as presented by the GRI:  **Internal benefits**: -Increased understanding of risks and opportunities  Emphasizing the link between financial and non-financial performance  -Influencing long term management strategy and policy, and business plans  -Streamlining processes, reducing costs and improving efficiency  -Benchmarking and assessing sustainability performance with respect to laws, norms, codes, performance standards, and voluntary initiatives  -Avoiding being implicated in publicized environmental, social and governance failures  -Comparing performance internally, and between organizations and sectors  **External benefits**:  -Mitigating – or reversing – negative environmental, social and governance impacts  Improving reputation and brand loyalty  -Enabling external stakeholders to understand the organization’s true value, and tangible and intangible assets  -Demonstrating how the organization influences, and is influenced by, expectations about sustainable development” | 8 | *Classroom discussion*: Ask students for examples of negative publicity that organisations have been subject to, and how this presents a risk. |  |
|  | International reporting initiatives | -Present leading reporting initiatives, and ask students which they have heard of  -Highlight the GRI ‘Carrot and Sticks’ report 2016 identified 400 reporting instruments across 64 countries | 9 | *Classroom discussion:* Students contribute knowledge/experiences of any reporting schemes |  |
|  | Global Reporting Initiative | Explain this is the most commonly used instrument globally. Show the 2016 reporting standards, and note that although there are more social standards this does not indicate greater importance.  Note that in fact this area is more challenging to identify and measure, and elicit that organisations are most likely to concentrate on the more readily identifiable environmental impacts. | 10-11 | Listen, make notes and ask questions as necessary |  |
|  | Journal: GRI Indicators |  |  | Read article, individually analyse actions for one of the performance indicator areas through further research. Report findings back to the class. | **6UBES E3 LO3 Activity 1 – CSR Reporting GRI Indicators** |
|  | Review of session and learning outcomes | Ask students questions based on discussions that have occurred in class in order to clarify individual and group learning |  |  |  |

### SESSION 2: Effectiveness and trends in reporting

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| **Approx.**  **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative assessment** |
| 4-5 hours | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | Effectiveness and trends in reporting | 12 |  |  |
|  | Effective reporting: integrated reporting | Explain challenges faced in time and costs involved in reporting, and that organisations may be fearful of public scrutiny, and be unsure of what to report. If unregulated, reporting can be selective of good practices only. To be effective, it needs to avoid bias and subjectivity. A trend towards integrated reporting now sees CSR issues reported alongside financial reports. | 13 | In pairs, students research the ‘Integrated Reporting’ website, either by sector or region of interest. Prepare a presentation of findings focusing on examples of good practice, and links to the GRI reporting standards. | **6UBES E3 LO3 Activity 5 – Integrated Reporting** |
|  | Trends | The KPMG (2016) ‘Carrots and Sticks’ report highlights that more companies report on CSR in Asia Pacific than in any other region, followed by the Americas, then Europe and then the Middle East/Africa.  Explain Europe’s ranking affected by lack of reporting in Eastern Europe but as of 2016 EU legislation now requires non-financial reporting by large companies. A surge of reporting in Asia is notable. | 14 | Listen, make notes and ask questions as necessary |  |
|  | Major current issues | Run through list of major issues that require reporting attention:  -Shortage of raw materials  -Definition of policies and actions to tackle climate change  -Reduction of waste and ecosystem contamination  -Reduction of wealth inequality  -Management of social conflict and migration  -Protection of human rights  -Definition of regional sustainable development plans  -Re-education of workers for new sectors  -Growth of ethical and reputational crises  -Reinforcement of anti-corruption policies | 15 | In pairs or small groups, brainstorm the challenges in reporting in a sector assigned to each grouping. Consider how the key major issues highlighted apply to that industry. Collate findings for the whole class, so a range of differing sectors are considered. | **6UBES E3 LO3 Activity 4 – CRS Reporting Challenges by Sector** |
|  | Digital reporting | Explain how technology is driving reporting requirements:  -More effective analysis  -Real time reporting  -Greater demands for transparency and-accountability  -More frequent updates  -More communication channels | 16 | Listen, make notes and ask questions as necessary |  |
|  | Journal: CSR reporting (Twitter) |  |  | Students read journal article and answer questions on use of Twitter in CSR reporting. In pairs, prepare a case to the Board of Directors in an organisation/industry of your choice, of why the organisation should develop its use of Twitter as a CSR tool, and how this should be approached. Present case in 5 minute delivery. Rest of the class should ask questions | **6UBES E3 LO3 Activity 2 – CSR Reporting - Twitter** |
|  | Journal: CSR reporting (hotels) |  |  | Read article, and review organisation websites to identify updates to practices. Individually carry out similar research into an organization of choice (could be as a homework task). | **6UBES E3 LO3 Activity 3 – CSR Reporting – Hotels and Other industry practices** |
|  | Review of session and learning outcomes | Ask students questions based on discussions that have occurred in class in order to clarify individual and group learning |  |  | Complete assessment criterion 3.1 |