INSTITUTIONALIZING SUSTAINABILITY LITERACY

Kedge Business School has been a partner of Sulitest since its inception. Sulitest was, in fact, co-founded by the former CSR director and a former economics professor and researcher at Kedge BS.

For many years, the French university has been the largest user of Sulitest, with the Awareness Test being integrated into the mandatory curriculum for all students.

This case study explores how Sulitest was institutionalised at Kedge Business School and the impact of this integration.
When, why and how was Sulitest integrated at Kedge?

The French university was engaged and committed to many corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Sulitest was a great vehicle for the Kedge to be a leader, by supporting an initiative not only impacting internally, but the entire sector of higher education. Therefore, Sulitest received great support from Kedge BS during its inception till present day.

Once the first version of Sulitest was launched in 2013, Jean-Christophe Carteron, co-founder of Sulitest and former CSR director at Kedge, asked the Head of the Programme to send a letter to all incoming students of the Grande Ecole Program encouraging them to take the Awareness Test. Then, the Sulitest co-founders took care of logistics to roll out the Test inside Kedge, and with the letter of support on hand, the first broad use of Sulitest at an institutional level took place.

The students’ response was very positive, the university communicated vastly about it, and Sulitest was used in reporting as proof of the engagement of the university to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and CSR. This ultimately created the commitment to keep offering the Awareness Test to new incoming students every year. In one of the following programme framework reviews, Sulitest was officially institutionalised as one of the sustainability initiatives of Kedge and, from then on, all students must take the Sulitest as part of their curriculum.

Success tips

Top-down + bottom-up approach
Having top leadership of the university inviting the students to take the Sulitest helped to convince candidates of the importance of the Test. And, at the same time, having some allies in some departments (i.e. faculty, programs, etc.) is important to start implementing the initiative and to push the message forward from the ground up.

Take the lead
Until an initiative like Sulitest becomes institutionalised and is done in autopilot, a leader who takes care of logistics and dissemination is crucial for the long-term success and sustainability of the initiative.

Language matters
Even when Sulitest was not yet a mandatory part of the programme, because it wasn’t explicitly stated “This is not mandatory”, the students’ uptake of the Test was much higher.
How do you use Sulitest at Kedge?

In the last two years, Sulitest has become a required activity for all incoming students and before graduation. Beyond the Awareness Test, all the tools are used as part of the student’s journey, from day one until graduation.

**DAY 1**

When students first join the school, they play the Quiz in teams, an interactive tool to spark curiosity about sustainable development.

**Awareness Test**

As students get interested to learn more, they are invited to take the Test at home. It is an opportunity to raise awareness and to identify the students’ expectations through a customized module.

**Looping**

During the academic year, professors use Looping in the classroom. This reverse pedagogy tool helps students understand the connection between course topics and the SDGs.

**Customization**

Other professors create customized modules to address learning objectives specific to their courses, as a learning tool or exam.

**GRADUATION**

Students take another Test before graduation, to continue to raise awareness and to assess the progress made since when students joined the university.
Even though the Awareness Test was ensuring all students, regardless of interest or program, were improving their sustainability knowledge, Kedge felt the need to have more impact. An university-wide approach towards sustainability literacy meant not only touching all students with the Awareness Test, but also integrating it into HR training, surveying student's mindset toward sustainability and their expectations of the university’s CSR practices, as well as helping faculty and students to connect their area of focus to sustainability. For that, Kedge made use of the customisation features of Sulitest’s Premium access.

Engaging faculty on their own expertise

Having a common base of knowledge is essential, but being able to go into the details of each subject taught with specific questions allows students to develop their knowledge for the exercise of their future profession. “In our corporate & sustainability finance program, for example, we invite our students to take a specific finance module that integrates sustainability issues in order to test their level of integration of these issues and to verify whether they have the capacity to integrate them into companies” says Christophe Revelli, head of MSc Corporate & Sustainable Finance.

Creating a subject-specific customised module not only impacts the students, but also faculty. Asking a department to create their questions can be a lever of transformation, by asking them to connect their area of practice to sustainability and as an incentive to co-create and collaborate.
**Staff engagement and training**

Last but not least, the CSR team of Kedge Business School also used Looping to co-create a specific module which will be used by the whole staff and faculty, to raise awareness about the institution’s commitment and actions towards sustainability. This module is also used with new employees as part of the onboarding process. This has been a great accelerator of the systemic implementation of “Kedge Impact”, the university’s strategy for education for sustainable development.

**Understanding student’s expectations**

Through a customised module, Kedge Business School deploys a questionnaire via the Sulitest that helps university management set priorities, respond to the incoming student body’s expectations and improve the student experience. When new students arrive on campus, they are asked to take the Awareness Test with the core international module as well as a survey-like customised module prepared by the CSR department of Kedge.

Sample questions include: ‘To what extent did Kedge’s CSR and sustainability policy influence your decision to enrol here?’ and ‘Well-being, equal opportunities, responsible management... What is your opinion about the sustainability themes your school is engaged with?’.

These questions also help the CSR department to collect feedback from the student body systematically, which can be used as leverage to expand the activities of the department.
What has been the impact of integrating Sulitest?

At the institutional level, communicating about the implementation of Sulitest and the resulting public interest, created traction for the initiative and an outside-in pressure to continue the commitment. It ensured the sustainability of the use of Sulitest in the long-run and the engagement of the university to expand its sustainable development education and performance.

When designing a strategy, there are two options. You can start small, inside-out, and then try to grow (and there are great examples of these). Alternatively, you can have an outside-in approach, influencing the system around the university to create an external pressure. By developing strategic partnerships with accrediting bodies and other leaders in the sector, the Sulitest and Kedge’s CSR department was able to accelerate change towards ESD inside the institution, while also pushing the sector forward.

Sulitest provided tangible data for reporting to accrediting bodies and rankings, as well as for the own internal management of the university, especially with the customised module. For the first time, student’s awareness and engagement could be shown in graphs and numbers, which helped gaining more support from the executive level. Moreover, the cultural change that resulted from this helped convince academics about the importance of ESD, including those that, many years ago, yet did not realise the connection of their own work to sustainable development.

Lastly, at the individual level, by integrating Sulitest in the programme, Kedge ensured that all students, regardless of their degree or interest for sustainability, have a better understanding of the sustainable development challenges that we all face as a society and their connection to it. That is the start of active citizenship for a better tomorrow.

“By incubating and financially supporting the Sulitest, we wanted to initiate change in the global academic community, and beyond, by providing a tool to assess and develop sustainability literacy for all. All our students are required to take the test. Our faculty members are developing customized modules to connect their expertises to the challenges of sustainability. Through its global distribution and its flexibility of use, we are convinced that the Sulitest is an exceptional tool for change.”

– Alexandre de Navaille
General Director, Kedge Business School
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