

ASHRIDGE BUSINESS SCHOOL GAINS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FROM RECENT ISO 50001 CERTIFICATION WITH SGS

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Ashridge Business School is a centre for management and organisational learning, renowned for its commitment to sustainability and seeking excellence in every aspect of its work. The school ensures its education, consulting and research work is consistent with the principles of sustainable development and this has been helped by its recent work with SGS United Kingdom Ltd in its certification to ISO 50001.

Although the property is Grade 1 listed, Ashridge Business School prove that historic buildings can still attain the standards needed for ISO 50001 certification. The challenge for Ashridge along with other listed buildings comes from the fact that the site's exceptional interest and historic significance must be balanced carefully against any other issues, in this case its energy performance. This means that significant challenges might arise between requirements of the ISO 50001 standard (energy performance improvement) and the conservation of a traditionally constructed and historic building.

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This shows that Ashridge Business School was able to identify and implement other means of demonstrating improvement(s) to energy performance without affecting the Grade 1 listed building requirements. Rebecca Hall, Sustainability Co-ordinator at Ashridge Business School recognises that as a Grade 1 listed property their recent certification to ISO 50001 is a great achievement.

Originally certificated to ISO 14001 in 2011 through SGS, Ashridge re-certified in 2014, recognising the fundamental need for certification. Having already made a commitment in the areas of energy use, water, waste and procurement, the school is constantly striving to improve its repertoire in terms of energy performance according to Rebecca Hall.

“With ISO 14001 already in place to guide our sustainability, ISO 50001 certification was the obvious choice to comply with the Energy Saving Opportunity Scheme (ESOS) and continue to improve on our sustainability reputation.”

ABOUT ISO 50001 CERTIFICATION

ISO 50001 is the International Standard applicable to all organisations regardless of size, type of industry or whether public or private, which enables organisations to establish the systems and processes necessary to continually improve energy performance, including energy efficiency, use and consumption. ISO 50001 achieves this through following the Plan – Do – Check – Act (PDCA) continual improvement framework that incorporates



energy management into everyday organisational practices. It is this structured and measured approach that sets ISO 50001 apart from other ESOS compliance routes and ensures continual improvement in an organisation's energy performance and the costs savings that are realised from that.

Rebecca Hall sees this as the way forward for energy management. "The focus on long-term energy projects means it is better for our organisation's development. 80% of our corporate clients ask if we hold ISO 14001 certification and there is no doubt that in the future businesses will expect us to be ISO 50001 certificated in the same way."

With detailed research and consideration, Ashridge Business School selected SGS to undertake the audit because of its expertise in energy management and also because of the good relationship the two companies already established with their work on the school's ISO 14001 management system certification. The ease of working with established partners was also one of the big pluses for the school. "We have worked with SGS for the last three years and have a good relationship with the auditors, who are professional but approachable to have open dialogue on the subject matter," said Rebecca.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The assessment process was well supported by SGS and in November 2015 Ashridge Business School had their initial certification audit. During this stage of the audit process a number of non-conformities were identified that required additional work to improve the energy management system. SGS continued to work with Ashridge Business School in a flexible way and a follow-up audit was completed at the end of January 2016 at which point certification was achieved.

"The assessment process was fairly challenging due to the fact we initially underestimated the amount of data analysis involved. However, when the second audit took place at the end of January we had shown significant improvement and the auditor judged that our management system was compliant with the standard," said Rebecca.

By cultivating a culture of continual improvement under the guidance of certification by SGS, Ashridge Business School is committed to ensuring that they maintain their certification to ISO 50001 through rigorous monitoring. As part of their commitment to ISO 50001 certification, Ashridge will also have to demonstrate continual improvement in energy performance. To achieve this, they have implemented a short and a long-term energy plan. Current targets include reducing electric heating by 10% year on year, and reducing scope 1 and scope 2 emissions by 100% by 2050.

ADVICE TO OTHERS CONSIDERING ISO 50001 CERTIFICATION

It was for these reasons as stated above that Ashridge Business School chose ISO 50001 certification as their ESOS route to compliance. Rebecca Hall believes "ESOS audits do not encourage organisations to continuously take sustainability and energy performance improvement forward in the same way as ISO 50001 certification. The process of implementing an energy management system and becoming certificated to ISO 50001 is advisable for any organisation looking to improve on their excellence and reputation."

ABOUT SGS

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