Living Lab approach: thinking tool

A Living Lab approach to sustainable development recognises the added value of integrating three areas of activity (teaching; research; and real-world impact) rather than pursuing these in isolation.

Often this will involve using the university campus as a living lab – for example, conducting a project to improve the efficiency of lighting systems (*real-world impact*) which also forms the focus of *research* (e.g. a PhD student evaluating the new system) and *teaching* (using this case study as the basis of a lecture or possible student projects in courses focussed on energy in buildings). The real-world impact might also take place in DMU’s local community (e.g. Leicester) or wider stakeholder or international communities.

**Living Lab Approach**

This thinking tool recognises that any living lab activity will typically start life mainly in one or two of the areas, and that a useful way to enhance this is to consider extra linkages (e.g. from teaching to research; from research to teaching; from real-world impact to teaching; etc., with six potential linkages to make). An ‘ideal’ Living Lab approach would demonstrate linkages being made in all six ways, as part of a holistic approach to achieving sustainability benefits.

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| **Project Name** |  |
| **Project Summary**  |  |
| **Project Lead(s) and Partners** |  |
| **Current Situation** | *Consider the nine questions below for your project from each perspective* |
| **TEACHING** | What is being done? |  |
| How is this informing research? |  |
| How is this linking to real-world impact? |  |
| **RESEARCH** | What is being done? |  |
| How is this informing teaching? |  |
| How is this linking to real-world impact? |  |
| **REAL-WORLD IMPACT** | What is being done? |  |
| How is this informing teaching? |  |
| How is this informing research? |  |
| **Potential Next Steps** | *Consider enhancements based upon consideration of the questions above* |
| **Next Achievable Steps** |  |
| **Long-term vision or future actions** |  |

**Learn more:** [The EAUC Living Lab Guide](https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/better_student_outcomes_through_sustainability_)