



University of Texas at Arlington Arlington, Texas Environmental Management Systems

SCHOOL

University of Texas at Arlington, Public, 4-year, 33,491 students enrolled, Arlington, Texas.

ABSTRACT

UT Arlington's Environmental and Regulatory Management System (ERMS) is a methodical approach to minimize adverse environmental impacts, maintain regulatory compliance, promote sustainability, and encourage safe work practices at The University of Texas Arlington (UT Arlington). The primary cost of implementing the ERMS can be attributed to staff time spent on working on the project. Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) did not specifically track the hours put into the project, thus it was difficult to assign a cost.

UT Arlington's ERMS has allowed the University to demonstrate its method of compliance with environmental regulations and increase safety, which thereby, reduces risk. The ERMS provides a systematic mechanism for measuring and monitoring risks associated with the environment and is a key part of the University's overall commitment to sustainability.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Goals

The goals of UT Arlington's ERMS include providing the latest guidance examples and resources for the development and implementation of processes and practices that enable the University to meet its environmental goals of reducing its environmental impact, ensuring compliance, promoting pollution prevention, increasing sustainability, and increasing operating efficiency.

It took UT Arlington approximately fifteen months to complete Phase I of the ERMS. UT Arlington's ERMS development started in September 2010 and Phase I was completed December 2011.

September 2010	Prepared ERMS work plan and conducted research.
October 2010	ERMS Policy and ERMS Purpose developed.
November 2010	Aspects and Impacts development initiated to include meetings with stakeholders from Office of Facilities Management.
January 2011	Initiated a thorough review of applicable federal, state, and local environmental regulations, as well as, related University policies.
March 2011	Began development and review of the Best Management Practices (BMP's).
April 2011	Began development of the ERMS on the University's EH&S website.
May 2011	Met with stakeholders from Office of Facilities Management regarding BMP's.
August 2011	Completed regulatory reviews.
October 2011	Completed BMP's.
November 2011	Completed ERMS website.

December 2011 Completed Phase I and implementation of the ERMS in Office of Facilities Management.

Challenges and Responses

Traditionally, environmental management systems are implemented across all operations at a facility simultaneously. This way of implementation works well for industry, smaller businesses, and offices where operations are easily delineated and there is a simple chain of command structure in place. Given the University's large size and complexity, it was not deemed realistic or effective to implement the ERMS in one single phase. The University is made up of a variety of undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools, each comprised of many departments with unique specialties. In addition to academics, the University maintains a large housing staff to oversee the maintenance of its dorms, a recreational department that maintains the gyms and athletic fields, and facilities maintenance staff that maintain the infrastructure of the University, such as utilities and buildings. With so many diverse operations, University-wide implementation would have been exceedingly difficult. To more effectively communicate the tasks and goals of the ERMS to all the faculty, staff, and students, as well as obtaining the required support from all departments, the ERMS is being implemented in incremental phases.

Phase I of UT Arlington's ERMS focused strictly on the Office of Facilities Management, which includes all the trade shops (i.e., automotive shop, carpenter shop, paint shop, HVAC, plumbing, etc.) that support the operation of the University. The objective of implementing Phase I was to have a systematic, quantitative method of evaluating key characteristics of the Office of Facilities Management operations to determine regulatory compliance and establish best practices. The College and University Environmental Management System and Best Management Practices Manual published by the Pennsylvania, Department of Environmental Protection was utilized as a model to develop the basic framework for UT Arlington's ERMS project.

Campus Climate Action: Your School's Carbon Footprint

UT Arlington's ERMS indirectly focuses on greenhouse gases. In 2010, UT Arlington hired an environmental engineer firm to conduct a GHS evaluation. Based on their evaluation, it was determined that UT Arlington was below EPA reporting threshold limits.

Commentary and Reflection

UT Arlington's Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Office set out to establish a framework that would allow the University to achieve its environmental goals through consistent control of its operations. UT Arlington's ERMS addresses the regulatory demands in a systematic manner and helps reduce the risk of non-compliance and improve health and safety practices for our students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community. Additionally, the ERMS addresses non-regulated issues, such as the University's policies on sustainability and energy conservation, and is intended to promote operational control and employee stewardship.

ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Leaders and Supporters

John Hall, VP Administration and Campus Operations

Leah Hoy, Director, Environmental Health & Safety Office

Office of Facilities Management

Office of Sustainability

Funding and Resources

The primary cost of implementing the ERMS can be attributed to staff time spent on working on the project. EH&S did not specifically track the hours put into the project, thus it is difficult to assign a cost. The project was supported and implemented internally through the Office of Environmental Health and Safety.

Education and Community Outreach

The project was submitted to AASHE Case Study Award for getting the word out and recognition. Also it has been listed online so other campuses can take advantage of it:
<http://www.uta.edu/campus-ops/ehs/EMS/index.php>

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MORE ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

Campus Sustainability History

The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to this triple bottom line and is striving to become a leader in campus sustainability through the efforts of administration, faculty, staff, and students. The University is actively engaged in greening facility operations, promoting innovative research, supporting and encouraging student initiatives, implementing environmentally and sustainability focused curriculum, and sponsoring public service initiatives. <http://www.uta.edu/sustainability>