

**Delivering  
sustainability  
in our estates,  
procurement  
and wider  
community**



The university launched its [Sustainability Strategic Action Plan \(SSAP\)](#) in November 2024. This is underpinned by a broad range of SMART KPIs set out in this document and other sustainability related policies and action plans.

The university has a clear legal and moral responsibility to ensure it reduces impacts on human health and the environment. This is laid out in our Sustainability Policy and is managed through the delivery of our Environmental Management System (EMS), certified to ISO14001 standards. The scope of the EMS covers our Estates and Facilities Directorate.

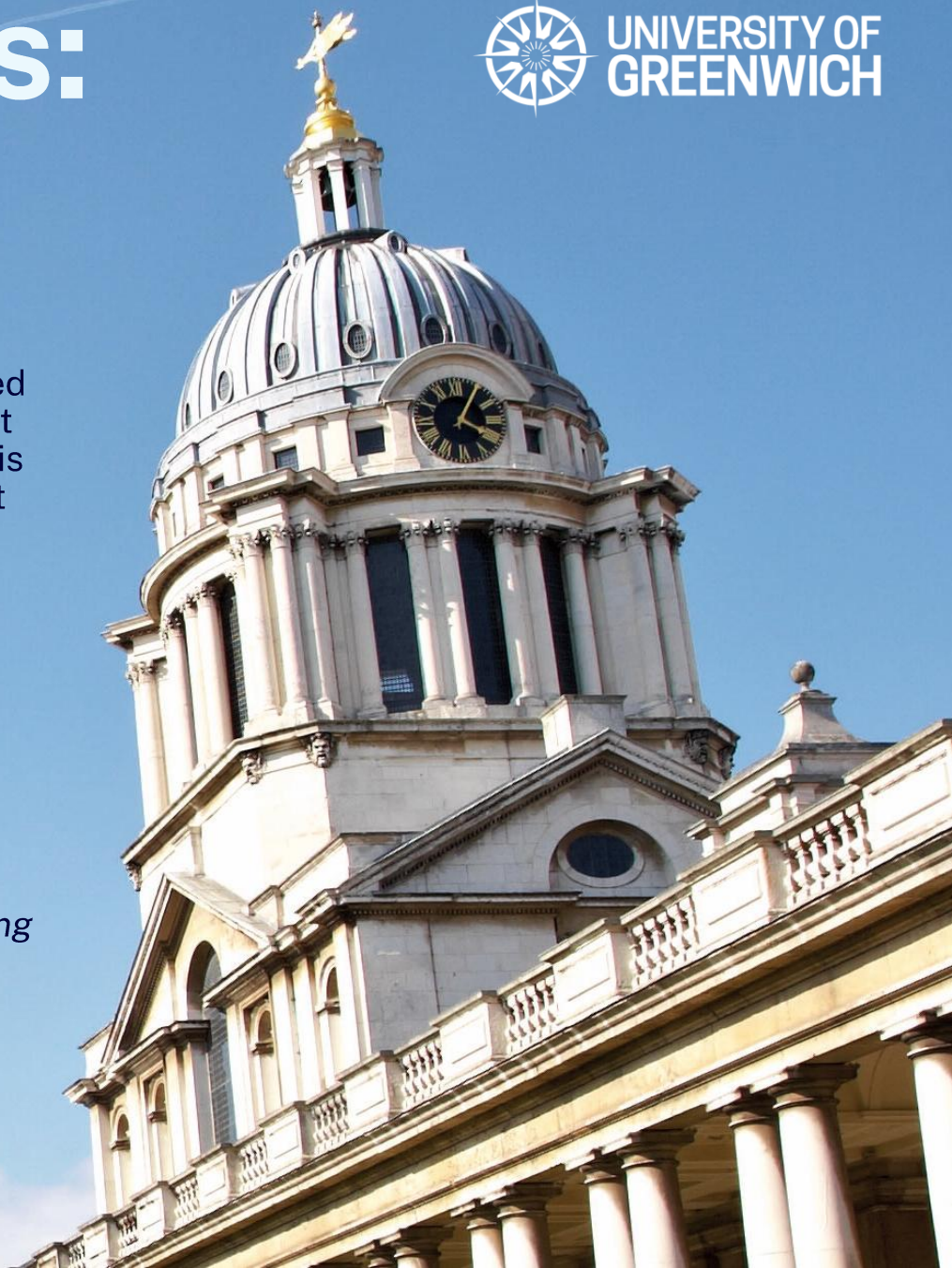
We have been certified since 2012, and it now operates a mature system, from a robust Aspects and Impacts register to auditing schedule for continual improvement.

We report progress in our [Annual Sustainability Report](#), which includes HESA Estates Management Data the university submits. We [provide data](#) and information on wider elements [including our](#) application of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, education and research.



# Estates based actions: Estates Strategy:

- The [Corporate strategy](#) states the need to deliver “*Connected and Sustainable Campuses*”. In March 2022 the university launched its [Estates Strategy](#) (supported by the Estates Development Plan). This includes how we will design and construct new buildings in addition to the refurbishment of those existing. Underpinning this is the Responsible and Sustainable Guiding Themes. Within this the Development Principles are:
  - Resilient to climate change,
  - Net zero carbon,
  - Sustainable design and use,
  - Environmentally net-positive and,
  - Supports Sustainable Behaviours.
- *“Future development will adopt circular-economy principles to minimise embodied and operational carbon and infrastructure upgrades will help us achieve net-zero across our campuses. Our campuses will become environmentally net positive, raising awareness and supporting our influence globally and with our local communities.”*
- The decarbonisation of the university priorities the heating systems. This will complete through the implementation of the university Estates Development Framework underpinned by the Estates Strategy. The [Net Zero Carbon Plan](#) sets out the SMART investments to decarbonise each campus by 2033 (note that the plan completion deadline has been extended).



# Biodiversity and natural spaces

The university is fortunate to have campuses with a variety of habitats, diverse species and be in proximity to others.

Our [Biodiversity Action Plan](#) (BAP) not only looks at 'biodiversity' but the accompanying ecosystem services that our natural land supplies. *Note this remains with a new BAP due the end of 2026.*

The BAP sets out the habitats, contexts and plans that we have in place for improving the value of our natural spaces, it also sets out how we engage with our internal and external stakeholders. Working with our academic experts we aim to develop initiatives that create Biodiversity Net Gain. For example, the Stockwell Street Building hosting a diverse collection of 14 landscape roofs including spaces for research and teaching as well as food growing spaces and wildlife.

We encourage the exploration of the natural space, for wellbeing, reflection and for learning teaching and research purposes. We undertake habitat surveys to review how we are progressing with the improvement of our habitat improvement.

The plan also looks to the future and the potential of our estates in delivering higher varieties and uses of natural land. See [Biodiversity Action Plan](#)



# Emissions & discharges

Our Sustainability Policy and Environmental Management System (EMS) allows us to identify, measure and review activities where significant emissions or discharges could occur. Our main areas where we emit to the air are through:

- Combustion of fossil fuels (Scope 1 carbon emissions) the burning gas for heating, catering and labs functions, fleet and business travel (Scope 3) and equipment (for example mowers). *This is reviewed via audits against net zero plan.*
- Emission of gases through experiments in laboratories and workshops. *Assessed against implementation of training, via LEAF lab audits.*
- Potential emission of F-gases from refrigeration and air conditioners. *Assessed against F-gas contractor reports.*
- Fire suppression systems (for example in server rooms). *Assessed against fire management systems.*
- Refurbishment or demolition of buildings generating potential dusts including asbestos. *Assessed via capital project systems. Asbestos management is third party with supervision from UoG Asbestos Duty Holder with reports to the H&S committee.*
- Emissions of chemicals through the degassing from paints, adhesives, furniture and carpets and printing services. *Assessed through contractor use of paints and materials.*
- Smoking and vaping. *Assessed against adherence to UoG policies.*
- Ventilated emissions from catering. *Assessed against performance of equipment used and good catering practices.*



# Emissions & discharges cont.

We manage, reduce and avoid releases to water focusing on the following areas:

- Oil Storage & spillages. *Assessed by records and reports to the Accident Reporting System (AMS) and site audits*
- Water sources maintenance. *Assessed by contractor records and reports to the AMS and site audits*
- Run off from parking areas or grounds. *Assessed by reports to the AMS and site audits*
- Unpermitted discharges by contractors including for events, or during an emergency. *Assessed by reports to the AMS*
- Leakage of materials stored on-site (chemicals, oil, lubricants, diesel, fertilizer, antifreeze, cleaning materials). *Assessed by reports to the AMS*
- Potential discharges to sewer (foul drainage - effluent) or surface water drainage during normal operation. *Reviewed against Discharge Consents*
- Controlled chemical disposal in laboratories. *Reviewed as part of sustainable labs initiatives.*

We recognise that some emissions and discharges will come from contractors. All contractors must adhere to the above processes. We also recognise the need to reduce impacts through the resource supply chain. This means working with suppliers that reduce emissions in production and transportation. It also means looking to maximise the utility of buildings and resources to reduce the need of new ones.



# Emissions & discharges

Our key indicator metrics that support our ability to meet success criteria are:

- Meeting net zero decarbonisation targets for estate and fleet. *As set out in the net zero plan.*
- Zero annual emissions of F-gasses. *Assessed through the review of F-gas reports via our engineering contractors.*
- Zero annual use of VOC containing paints. *Assessed though audit of contractors*
- Zero incidents annually relating to unmanaged asbestos release/exposure. *Assessed via reporting to via the AMS and reports to the H&S committee*
- Zero oil leaks annually. *Assessed via reporting to AMS*
- Zero uncontrolled emissions annually to drain. *Assessed via reporting to AMS*

All indicators are also reviewed through the internal and external environmental management system audits.

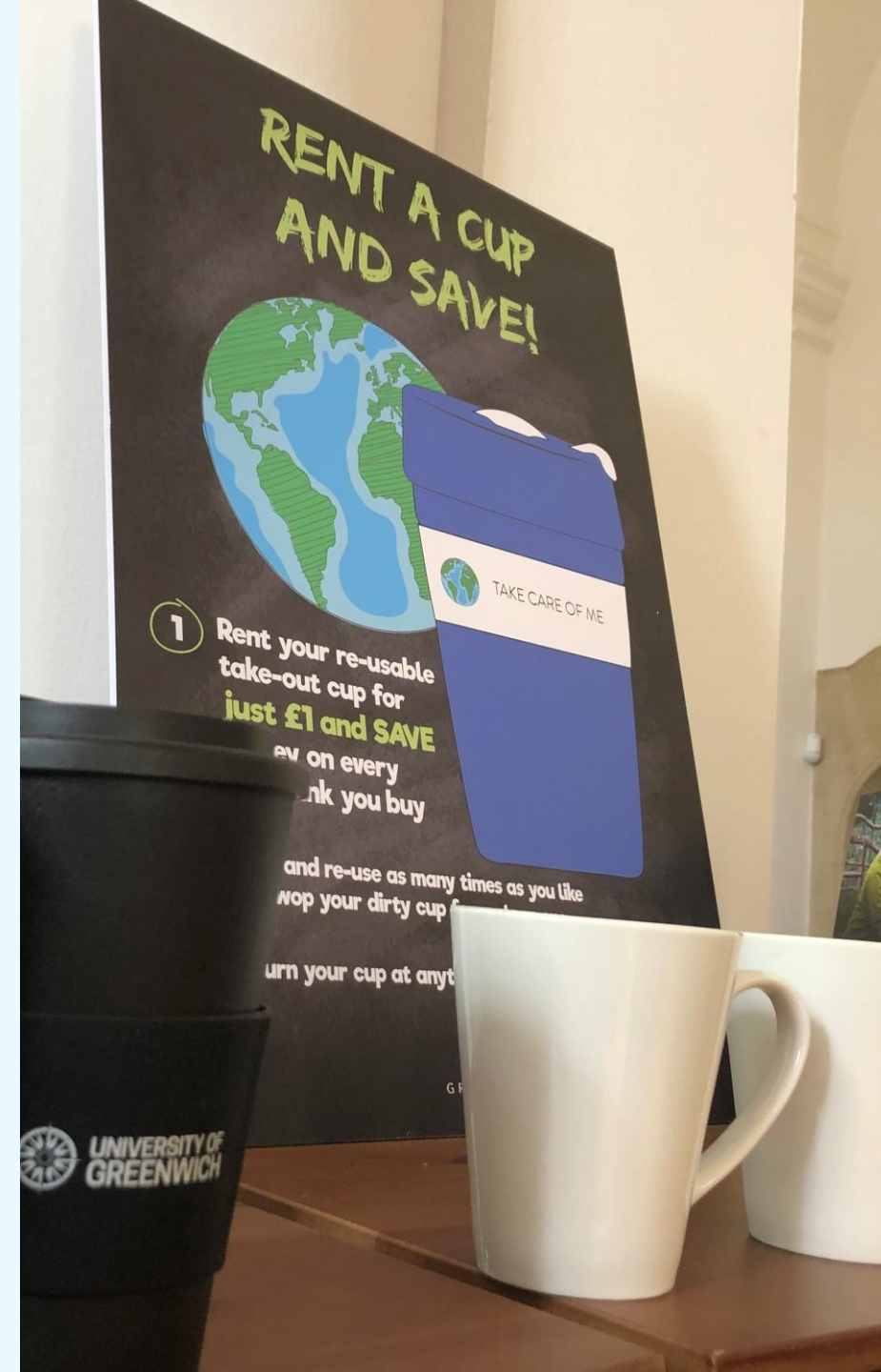


# Waste management

The university recognises the importance to reduce the amount of waste it generates and to move towards a circular economy model. Our Waste Action Plan sets out how we are delivering against this. We are actively pursuing circularity in areas such as furniture reuse, end of term (halls) reuse, green waste composting, on site food production, using waste, refined cooking oil in our CHP plant etc. We actively encourage staff to procure only when necessary and to buy materials that can be easily reused or recycled. We have, for example, set out guidance to ensure that marketing materials are avoided and if provided then are not single use, and are sustainable or have a long lasting, useful purpose. We have goals to increase the use of reusables in our catering outlets and increasing use of the water fountains and free drinking water areas on our campuses. We have comprehensive and consistent recycling systems across our university. We are also improving the systems in place for our halls residents to recycle. Our students deliver clothing 'Swaps' which have been successful in highlighting fast fashion, textile waste and reusability.

We consider data to be essential to help us respond to issues of waste generation and recycling and discuss monthly waste and analysis reports from our FM contractors. These are reviewed monthly with recommendations for action or investigation agreed to ensure waste generation is reduced and wherever possible recycling is increased.

Our recycling target is 70% by 2030 and as of 2024/25 we achieved 46%. Our Waste Action Plan, plus additional staff resourcing means we have better waste management that will improve this recycling rate in the remaining years.



# Waste management

The Corporate strategy sets out clearly the need to achieve zero waste. We have made ongoing progress particularly in reductions of waste against baseline year (2009/10) where we have reduced waste by 44% by 2024/25 when we have increased staff and student FTE by almost 50%. Initiatives reducing waste have included digitisation of work to avoid paper printing, implementation of furniture and end of term reuse schemes and initiatives encouraging use of reusable drinks containers. We made a 6% waste reduction improvement year-on-year.

Recycling had improved to 62% in 2019/20 (close to the 70% by 2030 target, though in 2024/25 this was 46%, with plans in place to meet the target.

We have a Waste Action Plan that sets out how we manage waste to avoid its generation, though avoiding new, reusing and recycling where possible. All general waste is sent to energy from waste plants.

We have piloted zero disposable campuses including at the Greenwich campus using Cauli as a programme to change consumer behaviours.



# Water

Water is essential to life on earth and to the operation of our university.

Recognising that our estates are located within water stressed areas of the country the aim is to minimise its usage. Minimising and preventing the release of substances into sewers and water courses will protect our 'blue' environments. Understanding the water 'footprint' of the materials we buy-in, including food is also crucial. To help meet this need we aim to maximise shared and best practice.

## Water consumption:

The aim is to minimise water use through the correct investment in systems. A significant proportion of urinals across the university are waterless, with low-flow toilet cisterns and water flow restrictors in our halls of residence. Shower heads and taps are reviewed and replaced to continually improve water efficiency. Support to users in high demand areas such as labs and catering is provided. Grounds related water use is limited to watering the amenity grass and goal mouths of our grass football pitches.

Water use is monitored via our El Component AMR utility data collection system, plus manual monthly meter reads by facilities staff plus the review of AMR utility water data. This is helping ensure we are identifying leaks quickly in addition to helping focus attention where unexpectedly high water use is occurring.



# Water cont.

The university has a SMART target to reduce consumption by 1% per year. In 2023/24 we achieved a 48.5% increase of water consumption against baseline (2009/10) (during which our FTE increased by 27%), and a 14.3% decrease year-on-year. Compared to an FTE difference of a 27% increase between years. This increase is in part due to meter reporting errors between reporting years.

## Reducing releases to water

The university has in place management and training procedures around the release of harmful substances to sewers and watercourses. This includes labs (via LEAF support), workshops, catering and the management of risks where spills could occur around the campus (such as oil/fuel leaks, car wash run off etc).

## Blue environmental management and protection

We have an ongoing habitat improvement scheme. This includes the restoration and improvement of our 'blue' environment areas: rivers, streams, ponds and their border areas. Part of the university's Ecosystems Services Policy identifies the need to reduce and eliminate herbicides that can if not applied and managed safely impact on water sources.



# Travel and Transport

The university is committed to reduce the carbon related to its travel needs. It has undertaken a programme of investment in its fleet including the investment in hybrid coaches between the Greenwich and Medway campuses and two electric busses between the Avery Hill and Greenwich campuses.

Our Green Travel Plan will help meet net zero plans and reduce the need to travel between campuses or reduce the demand for car related travel encouraging active travel or electric car use. A significant part of our travel footprint comes from business travel flights. Our net zero plan includes the need to reduce business travel including flight emissions by 50% by 2030. It is expected the Green Travel plan could deliver this sooner than this.

The SMART KPI's can be found in the Green Travel Plan. Progress will be reported on the collection of data for the HESA EMR submission.

See [Green Travel Plan](#)





# Stakeholder engagement

The university has a [Sustainability Engagement Strategy](#), that sets out who we engage with and how we do this.

We recognise that we have important stakeholder groups that are essential to helping us deliver sustainability improvement. This includes students, staff (including some in high impact areas), contractors, as well as external stakeholders such as local authorities, businesses and the communities we reside within.

Within the Strategy we have set out our KPIs to illustrate our progress.

