

University of Reading Continuous Improvement Reading, Steady, Green!

About the project

Summary

Since 2008, our holistic approach to environmental management has enabled staff and students to come together and deliver significant and quantifiable environmental improvements. We have delivered a 23% absolute cut in our carbon emissions, meaning we are on track to meet our 35% carbon reduction target in 2016. We have increased passenger numbers on buses to and from our main campus by 20% each year since 2011, have reduced waste produced by a third and have almost completely eradicated waste sent to landfill. Together, this work has saved £7.4million and 32,155 tCO₂, and in 2014/15, we achieved certification under both ISO14001 and ISO50001.

Project partners

The University has been successful in drawing in funding from external sources to help deliver its projects. Important examples of this are utilising money from Salix (£911,232) and the HEFCE Revolving Green Fund (£500,000 in 2014, with a further £500,000 for investment in 2015/16) to deliver on energy efficiency improvements. Reading Borough Council's Local Sustainable Transport Fund provided funding for ReadyBike, Dr Bike and support for the Unicycle scheme.

The results

The approach

The University has committed itself to this goal with 4 key work-streams; carbon reduction, environmental impacts, sustainable travel and teaching & research, A Sustainability Team was established to manage environmental performance which has slowly grown to its current size of 8 full time staff, including an Engineering Doctorate student working at the cutting edge of research into sustainability.

Our goals

In 2008, the University set out on its journey to achieve the highest standards of environmental performance and to be recognised as an organisation that is delivering as well as teaching and researching environmental and sustainability excellence.



Profile

The University of Reading is in the top 1% of universities worldwide. It is a research-intensive University, based over three main campuses. There are currently over 17,000 students and nearly 4000 members of staff.

Finalist's case study

Obstacles and solutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring senior management support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong business cases setting out all the benefits not just the environmental ones
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with building users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explanation of the increased levels of comfort projects can deliver
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in partnership with the students union to deliver a varied programme of events

Performance and results

In terms of the programme as a whole, the benefits have certainly been more than the sum of their parts. The University has led by example and inspired its staff and students to take action creating a positive environment that change is possible. To summarise some of the key achievements since 2008/2009 we have achieved;

- A 26% absolute reduction in our carbon emissions
- A 20% year-on-year increase in bus passenger numbers to and from the University
- A 33% reduction in waste produced by the University

The future

Lessons learned

We found that once the Sustainability Team demonstrated leadership on sustainability initiatives, other staff and students across the estate took it upon themselves to take localised actions too; creating a momentum for change, without the direct involvement of the Sustainability Team. Good examples of this include the Catering department ensuring all fish products are MSC certified as well as the Henley Business School running its own water efficiency campaign in its building.

Sharing your project

We actively contribute to case studies and news articles disseminating the work we have done most recently for the Carbon Trust, Salix Finance and University Business. We publish annual Environment & Sustainability and Carbon Management progress reports on our website, plus quarterly newsletters to publicise initiatives and share our experiences. We have an active social media presence with circa 800 Twitter and 200 Facebook follows and a news blog, are active participants in EAUC and Carbon Trust participatory initiatives. We regularly host and visit other universities and businesses to share our experiences, recently hosting international representatives from Kyocera and presenting at Reading's Climate Action Network group. We also regularly deliver lectures and mentor BSc and MSc final year projects.

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

"We are delighted to be nominated for not one but three Green Gown Awards. This demonstrates the commitment of the University to sustainability as well as our ability to deliver all that we have promised." Sir David Bell, Vice-Chancellor



Green Gown
Awards 2015

Finalist's case study



Dissemination
supported by:

hefce
HIGHER EDUCATION
FUNDING COUNCIL
FOR ENGLAND

Further information

James Thorpe

j.thorpe@reading.ac.uk

www.reading.ac.uk/cleanandgreen

@unirdg_sust