

London College of Fashion Continuous Improvement

Building the big picture through collage: London College of Fashion's Teaching & Research journey

About the project

Summary

London College of Fashion has been working to integrate sustainability across the areas of Learning, Teaching & Research (LTR) through our Centre for Sustainable Fashion, formal curriculum, informal extracurricular and learning activities and opportunities, and collaborations with partners. We think that through some excellent examples we have developed models of how sustainability can be exciting, relevant, useful, and support employability in an educational and lifelong learning context.

Project partners

Much sustainability activity has been initiated and delivered by the Centre for Sustainable Fashion (CSF) however we are now proud to recognize champions and best practice in mainstream locations across disciplines, levels and administrative functions at LCF. This network is supported by the LCF Sustainability Coordinator and offers a link into the wider University of the Arts London community, the HE sector, the fashion industry, local communities and other relevant industries/sectors. Many leading projects have been in collaboration with a 3rd party – notable partners include the UN, HEA, Erasmus, Defra, AHRC, Leverhulme Trust, Wellcome Trust, the Met Office, Nike, Kering, H&M, Marks & Spencer, Selfridges. Co-creation and collaboration are key to our work as we believe this to be one of the important defining features to sustainable development.

The results

The problem

It is true to say that sustainability is now taken seriously at an institutional level. There is however, as is the complex and shifting nature of the subject, a perennial need for wider and deeper sharing and critique of sustainability at LCF.

The approach

London College of Fashion has invested time, resources and creative capital into the application and research of sustainability practice at all levels of the institution. It has seen significant growth and culture change in the 7 years since the first steps were made. The outputs and activities reach a diverse cross section of communities,

ual: university
of the arts
london

Profile

- LCF is one of 6 colleges which comprise UAL
- LCF has over 500 staff & 5,500 students
- UAL has over 2,000 staff and 19,000 students
- LCF is located over 6 urban London sites.

disciplines, levels and locations. We believe there is no one solution to the pressing challenges of our time, but that many responses and a collective desire for change can together create the momentum required to establish new sustainable mindsets, societies, culture, and infrastructure. We hope that the significant developments we have demonstrated can serve as best practice to build upon and give us a platform for our forthcoming endeavours, however we believe that we must embrace complexity and change to deal with the ever evolving challenge of sustainable development and behavior change for an equitable future.

Our goals

Develop sustainability literate staff, students and graduates at LCF.

Develop and deliver mandatory formal sustainability training for all students and staff at LCF.

Research and deliver new pedagogies for a transformed curriculum with sustainability at its core.

Continue to support and develop sustainability activity across all levels and disciplines at LCF, enabling champions to be seen and heard.

Obstacles and solutions

- Lack of interest in staff & student communities / use combination of mandatory training and enhanced project based activities to develop expertise and skillset.
- Limited access to funding / explore a diverse selection of public & private opportunities, work with partners who have a shared vision for transformation.

Performance and results

The journey is both complex and long term, with various milestones that highlight success. Key successes have included

- Sustainability and transformative curriculum is cited in the UAL strategy 2015-22
<http://www.arts.ac.uk/about-ual/strategy-governance/ual-strategy-2015-22/>
- Every course at LCF is prompted to consider and integrate sustainability through the validation process.
- The creation of the full time LCF Sustainability Coordinator post in 2013 has enhanced visibility of sustainability internally and has enabled a systemic approach to measuring, improving and communicating performance in this area both internally and externally.
- In 2014, UAL created 2 new professorships in sustainability. CSF now has 5 professors in this field – Dilys Williams, Professor of Fashion Design for Sustainability; Lucy Orta, Chair of Art, Fashion & the Environment; Sandy Black, Professor in Fashion Design & Textile Technology, Helen Storey, Professor of Fashion & Science; Kate Fletcher, Professor of Sustainability, Design & Fashion.

The future

Lessons learned

Sustainability means dealing with shifting contexts and complex scenarios for the world and our needs. We must embrace this whilst finding ways to remain informed, resilient and creative.

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

To win a Green Gown award would be an outstanding achievement for London College of Fashion, UAL. As a University we are working hard to embed principles of sustainability into everything we do. When our work is recognised in this way it really helps to galvanise staff and students and underlines that the work we are doing must continue and that we're heading in the right direction.

Further information

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