



Green Gown
Awards 2016



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Finalist's case study



University of Limerick Best Newcomer UL Smarter Travel

About the project

Summary

This project aims to open people's eyes to alternatives to single-occupancy driving. UL Smarter Travel has implemented a range of measures to encourage staff and students of the University to use sustainable travel modes, such as walking, cycling, taking the bus and car-sharing, for daily commutes. The University has invested in hard measures such as physical infrastructure and travel policies and in soft measures such as behaviour change strategies and has seen a shift from car-based travel to more sustainable forms of travel over the period 2011 to 2015.

Project partners

Limerick Smarter Travel
UL Students' Union
First Seven Weeks Programme
UL Buildings & Estates Department
Student Academic Affairs
International Education Division
NTA Smarter Travel Programme
UL Green Campus

The results

The problem

Staff and students were not considering alternative to single-occupancy driving. This led to traffic congestion, an over demand for car-parking, poor air quality, less active and therefore healthier campus community.

The approach

Top level support from President Don Barry, led to the commitment by the University to engage in smarter travel promotion and the signing of the Smarter Travel Charter in June 2013 is seen as the formalisation of this promise. This in turn led to the creation of two smarter travel coordinator roles.

We developed an Action Plan after surveying staff and students; from attending community engagement events; from focus-group meetings; from studying exemplar smarter travel campuses and from learning from the Irish National Transport Authority's Smarter Travel programmes.

At the beginning of each semester we set up a stall in the centre of campus from which we engage with thousands of new students that are brought to us by tour guides. We highlight the range of UL smarter travel



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
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Profile

- Higher Education
- 14,857 students
- 1,400 staff
- Suburban



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facilities using our smarter travel publications including our "UL Journey Planner" and the "7 Tips for Cycling in UL" booklet which are uniquely designed in-house as well as our website.

We organise a number of events to encourage alternatives to the car; many of these include extended challenges where staff or students must form teams and commit to travelling sustainably for a period of time.

We organise a number of things that directly facilitate smarter travel; the main one being the free bike mechanic service that operates on a weekly basis all year around. The service is free; customers are just charged for the replacement parts. We offer free bike maintenances classes and free cycling training classes. We have a number of fleet bikes which we loan to staff and students for up to a week.

We recognise that involving students in smarter travel related activities through their coursework, leads to real engagement. We have introduced smart travel into the curricula of several courses from civil engineering to product design.

Our goals

To increase the share of staff and students choosing sustainable modes of travel and decrease the share using the car.

Obstacles and solutions

Obstacles	Solutions
People's deep rooted habits	Team-base challenges
	advertising
	arranging events
Infrastructural Deficiencies	More pedestrian and cycling paths, More secure bike parking
	More showers
	Better access to public transport

Performance and results

	2011	2014	2015
Walking	6.6%	8.3%	10.2%
Bicycle	8.4%	11.6%	10.8%
Bus	2.7%	3.6%	4.3%
Driving a car	75.9%	69.1%	68.2%
Car passenger	4.9%	5.9%	5.5%
Other	1.5%	1.5%	1.0%

UL Staff Modal Shift from 2011-2015

	2011	2014	2015
Walking	46.2%	48.4%	49.8%
Bicycle	6.6%	11.6%	12.3%
Bus	12.4%	8.4%	6.5%
Driving a car	29.4%	22.7%	24.1%
Car passenger	4.3%	7.4%	6.6%
Other	1.2%	1.4%	0.8%

UL Students Modal Shift from 2011-2015



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The University was named **Smarter Travel Campus of the Year**, **Cycling Campus of the Year**, **Student Union of the Year** and **Sustainable Champions of the Year**.

The University also won the Road Safety Authority **Leading Lights Award** under the Education (Third Level) category for work done to promote road safety to staff and students.

In October 2015, UL was also awarded the internationally recognised Green Flag by An Taisce's Green-Campus programme on behalf of the Foundation for Environmental Education.

The future

Lessons learned

1. Soft measures are harder to implement than hard measures!
2. The quotation "If you build it, they will come" is not enough! An on-going promotional behavioural change campaign is necessary to encourage people to consider alternative to single-occupancy driving.
3. People like a challenge; we have learnt that challenging groups to commit to travelling sustainably can change behaviours.

Sharing your project

We share our experiences at Smarter Travel seminars as well as at the annual Irish Transport Research Network Conference. And the "Why Cycle to UL" video which was a student project has been shared thousands of times.

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

The University has high environmental standards and winning the Green Gown Award is affirmation for the good work being carried out to promote smarter travel.

Further information

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