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# Finalist's case study

## University of Greenwich Food and Drink

### “Recipe for Success” at the University of Greenwich

#### About the project

##### Summary

Our initiative uses the collaborative potential of all those with a relationship with food to ensure Greenwich can deliver the most responsible, nutritious and delicious food. Working with our students, staff, caterers and external organisations we celebrate what food can positively do. Through collaboration we seek and deliver best practice in the provision and production of food providing an excellent platform to connect to many related sustainability issues.

#### Project partners

- University of Greenwich Catering & Events Team
- BaxterStorey (contracted caterers)
- Sodexo
- Students' Union
- Students
- University of Greenwich Sustainable Development Unit.

#### The results

##### The problem

There was no obvious problem, rather a great opportunity that could be exploited that has enabled a far more collaborative, effective and efficient way of delivering responsible food services within and beyond the University.

##### The approach

University partners involved with food provision and sustainability realised the importance of responsibility in the sourcing and production of food. All partners committed to collaborate to create the tools and systems to enable this to happen. Our Sustainable Food Policy has developed in collaboration with our stakeholders and its ambition and breadth is challenging and inspiring. Setting stretch goals and achieving them through individual and collaborative endeavors has created a partnership that is supportive and rewarding. It is spreading best practice beyond the University through our partner organisations, to community bodies and through our staff and students and their learning about sustainable food.



UNIVERSITY of  
GREENWICH

#### Profile

- Higher Education
- 21,295 students
- 1,800 staff
- Urban

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## Our goals

Our Sustainable Food Policy (SFP) sets out our goals and includes 16 headline goals we are consistently achieving. Beyond this we are working on delivering 46 additional targets. These relate to issues including; engagement, accreditations, food categories, menus, disposables, cleaning, waste, transport, energy, training, community and nutrition. Examples include to: increase to 50% meat free meals in our catering university outlet catering menus, sell community allotment grown produce at on campus outlets, seek to ensure no disposable cups are used to 'drink-in', further consolidate deliveries and develop nutritional labelling on our menus.

## Obstacles and solutions

Changing the menu to fit the Food for Life goals incurred a price increase in products	BaxterStorey and the University worked together and with a small tariff increase allowed us to reach Gold. No customer complaints were raised through this action. BaxterStorey also worked with its supply chain to minimise the cost of raw materials and promoted their use to encourage sales of these responsible products elsewhere.
Getting the message out	It was harder than we expected to inform our users of the responsibilities we are taking on their behalf. Efforts to create good marketing collateral including menu boards and posters plus discussions with customers about our work has helped engage our customers to appreciate that responsible food can be affordable, tasty and nutritious.
Keeping the message live	Time and effort was well spent in developing hands-on events and promotions including Freshers Fayres, cooking demonstrations, sampling, supplier events, surveys. This helped get across our messages in ways that appealed to the senses, particularly the taste buds!
Tackling challenging impacts e.g. disposable cups	An on-going issue we are struggling with is the use of disposable drinks containers. Although we offer free water at our outlets and sell reusable water bottles to help users swop from bottled water, the challenge of enabling users to select china and use their own reusable hot beverage cups is a challenge. We have employed students to undertake research and produce reports to guide us. We are now beginning to implement recommendations from these and the progress of each initiative will be reviewed against the daily reusable/disposable cup data the caterers now provide us.

## Performance and results

- Attaining Fairtrade University status in 2011 and maintaining this to date with annually increasing sales and breadth of items included
- Food for Life BaxterStorey (all outlets at Greenwich): Bronze 2013, Silver 2014, Gold 2015.
- Food for Life Sodexo (The Dome): Gold 2015
- Marine Stewardship Council 'University of the Year' 2014
- Times Higher Award for 'Outstanding Contribution to Sustainable Development' 2013
- ISO 14001 certification covering Greenwich's contracted catering
- Good Food in Greenwich Charter founding signatories (University of Greenwich and Students Union University of Greenwich) 2014.
- Part of Sustainable Fish City (with Sustain) 2012
- Successful delivery of Green Impact



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- 50% increase in Fairtrade sales 2014-15
- 8% increase in transactions year across the campus and a 16% increase in sales year on year

## The future

### Lessons learned

The project could, in hindsight, have communicated more what it was doing and explain its successes. Although the initiative has progressed beyond our expectations most of our attention was on improving the delivery of responsible food and assisting others, rather than highlighting the actions and progress we have made. This includes engaging more of our students and staff more in telling more of a story and helping them learn more about key issues that as providers we may take for granted. Finding creative ways to engage will be important moving forward and fortunately food is something that can capture the senses and may lead to wider non-food related positive behavior changes.

### Sharing your project

The project is communicated through the work we do on campus and beyond via social media. We intend to develop a more comprehensive and engaging communication strategy. This will be useful for our staff and students and also other food providers who can learn some of what Greenwich and its caterers have experienced. We are looking at how the work that has been done can form the basis for some exciting 'Living Lab' type research and active learning projects for students and staff. The work would seek to bring in students and staff from many disciplines to work out how best we can disseminate and engage others in our initiative.

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

It has provided us with external recognition that we're doing a great job provides reward, satisfaction and legitimacy. Even the process of submitting has helped our partners reflect on our practices, progress and achievements. It has helped the partnership refocus and reenergize, to push even further forward. It is giving us the impetus to communicate more confidently, engage more effectively and to look forward to what more we can all do.

### Further information

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- Students Union University of Greenwich: <https://www.suug.co.uk/>
- Sodexo: <http://uk.sodexo.com/home/services/on-site-services/universities.html>