



Green Gown
Awards 2016



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Nottingham Trent University Food and Drink You are what you eat

About the project

Summary

At NTU, we are committed to creating a 'University of the future'; our catering department does this by engaging with local suppliers, actively sharing ideas with the local community, reducing food miles, working with staff and students to grow fresh organic produce on-site, donating or recycling food waste wherever possible, carefully designing our procurement processes with sustainability and efficiency in mind and being mindful of the whole lifecycle of the food that ends up on our plates.

Project partners

Led by Nottingham Trent University's Catering team, the project has been supported by our Environment and Procurement teams, our suppliers and the Soil Association, who have provided advice and support in NTU's gaining and retention of the Food for Life Silver accreditation.

The results

The problem

A regular response from NTU's annual student survey is that they want affordable, appetizing, yet sustainable food options available on campus. In previous years the focus for procurement had been to gain value for money with little consideration of the environmental or social impact of where supplies came from. In some cases, we were overlooking local suppliers and buying from mainland Europe. There had also been little attempt at engaging NTU students with issues relating to the sustainability of food.

The approach

The Catering team went back to basics. With support from the Environment and Procurement teams, they developed a sustainable food policy and embarked upon the journey to become the first University to receive a Food for Life Silver Catering mark for 'student feeding' – meaning all hot meals produced in-house meet the Food for Life Silver criteria. This has led to the Catering team sourcing and developing close relationships with local suppliers, with all of our fresh meat and produce sourced from within a 50-mile radius of the University. Since then the team have gone even further. From the use of cold press rapeseed oil, grown in the Cotswolds and returned to farm to be recycled as bio-diesel, to donating unsold sandwiches to be distributed amongst local homeless people.

Our goals

At NTU our goal is to provide an inspiring learning and teaching environment for students, staff and customers while maximizing space quality and operational efficiencies. Energy, passion and an acute sense of social

NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY

Profile

- Higher Education
- 27,000 students (includes full and part time students)
- 2500 staff
- Urban

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responsibility drive our work. We aim to produce a first-class catering offering without compromising our commitment to using sustainably and ethically sourced food.

Obstacles and solutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns that cost of obtaining Food for Life would be too great 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from Soil Association and Procurement team helped to keep costs down and even find cheaper AND more sustainable ingredients
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding and developing relationships with local suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaising with local schools and organisations to combine purchases and reduce food miles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaining support of staff and students for proposed changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Environment Team to promote benefits of sustainable food through Foodshare project and outdoor classroom and other communications

Performance and results

By actively improving our procurement practices, switching to local suppliers and carefully managing our food waste we have succeeded in dramatically reducing our food miles, promoting healthy eating, strengthening links with local schools and hospitals, and ensuring better animal welfare. We are investing in the local community and providing food for the homeless through our Foodshare and sandwich reuse projects. We have put steps in place to reduce food waste as much as possible, and direct any resulting waste to anaerobic digestion.

The future

Lessons learned

Working with the Soil Association and the Environment team has enabled the Catering team to take a more holistic and sustainable approach to sourcing, producing and disposing of food at NTU. Addressing wider concerns has allowed the team to develop close relationships with their suppliers and work with outside organisations to find sustainable solutions that save money too!

Sharing your project

The project has encouraged NTU students to engage with the sustainable food agenda and take more interest in where their food comes from. Since the inception of the Foodshare project, an increasing number of students are volunteering, gaining food growing skills and sharing the fruits of their labour with the local community. NTU's success as a Food for Life accredited university has led to interest from other organisations from schools to local councils, and an academic who is interested in developing a similar scheme in Canada.

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

Being a Green Gown Award finalist is a great honour as it confirms that our work is worthy of recognition. While this project has been beneficial to our staff and students, we are elated to find that sharing our experience may be beneficial to other institutions.



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Further information

Find out more about our work on Sustainable food at

http://www4.ntu.ac.uk/current_students/services/catering/sustainability/index.html

Find out more about the Food for Life project at

<http://www.trentstudents.org/allotmentvolunteering>