



Green Gown
Awards 2016



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Finalist's case study

University of Salford Facilities and Services *Choose to reUse*

About the project

Summary

The Salford reUse scheme was created from necessity but has exceeded all expectations being on track to achieve £0.5 million savings over five years. With very little investment, a streamlined management system and support from budget controls and procurement policy the scheme has achieved a real change in mind-set across the University towards reuse as the norm rather than buying new, as well as the financial savings and reduced waste.

Project partners

The project has been developed in partnership with the Environmental Sustainability Team, the Building Management Team, Procurement Team and Digital Team at the University of Salford.

The results

The problem

In 2011 a Transformation Programme was launched in the light of a budget crisis at the University of Salford in order to identify measures to save £7m in non-pay costs. As part of this a Savings Challenge was launched which generated over 400 ideas from staff across the University. One of these ideas was to reuse furniture around the University.

The approach

In partnership with the Environmental Sustainability Team, the Building Management Team, Procurement Team and Digital Team, a student intern generated a reuse scheme concept, model and design. As a result a holistic internal system was developed which included an online front-facing portal, an online back-facing management system, procurement policies and controls and physical storage space.

The Salford reUse scheme was launched in November 2011 to all staff along with all budgets for furniture procurement being removed and a policy requirement to consult the reUse system before any purchases of new furniture items were approved. As the system became more successful it further evolved to include items additional to furniture and to seek out partners to donate items to that could not be reused within the University.

With the support of the Finance, Procurement and Building Management teams the system resulted in significant savings over the first ten months (over four times the targets set) with over 500 items being reused and the scheme expanded to include other equipment and stationery as colleagues bought into the system and looked to donate unwanted items and reduce the number of new items they were purchasing.



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

Profile

- Higher Education
- 23,440 students (includes full and part time students)
- 2500 staff
- Urban



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The scheme continued its success in 2012/13 with 429 items reused and 2013/14 with 439 reused, being particularly successful with building clearance projects. Due to the popularity of the system we also were able to engage local charitable partners for donations of items that could not be reused in house including chairs for a local community centre, kitchenware for a local homeless shelter and craft items for a kids club.

Alongside this, the furniture procurement budgets in every department were reduced by over 90% during these years. Despite initial resistance to this, a real change of mindset has occurred with colleagues recognising the quality of the items that can be obtained through the reUSE scheme and less hoarding of items and more willingness to share.

The scheme was well embedded and consistently realising significant savings however hit a hurdle when a change to a new online content management system meant that the 'back end' of the online system could not be transferred across. Almost overnight the tracking and management side of the system was removed. As a result the decision was made to subscribe to WARP-it the national online system to support reuse within an organisation and beyond. The funding was justified as the saving potential had already been demonstrated so there was confidence in a very short payback period. The additional benefits to the system were an improved user experience and interface, better reporting data and improved opportunities to link with local partners.

The opportunity was taken to re-launch the reUSE scheme within the WARP-it frame in April 2015. All concerns about colleagues having to sign up to a new system have been unfounded as the scheme has been even more successful with nearly 600 items being reused in the last year (2015/16)! The benefits of the WARP-it system are improved monitoring data – waste avoided, carbon savings etc and improved user experience.

Obstacles and solutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of resources to develop a system to facilitate reuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of student internship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to ensure staff considered reuse rather than new items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significantly reduce furniture procurement budgets and implement a requirement to check reuse system before purchases approved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storage space for items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of WARP-it system and communication to encourage movement of items from one use to another, removing the requirement for storage as much as possible Engagement of local charitable and community partners for items no longer required within the University
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of internal system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of outsourced WARP-it system which also gave additional functionality

Performance and results

The main benefits of the scheme and the main aim were initially financial savings compared to purchasing new items. Since the launch of the system in Nov 2011 nearly 2000 items have been reused giving financial savings of £422,000. We are on track to achieve £500,000 within 5 years.



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Since implementing the WARP-it scheme we have had further monitoring data available. Just in the last year since May 2015, the scheme has avoided nearly 20,000kg of waste, saved 50,000kg of carbon – the equivalent of 21 cars off the road and 67 trees!

The main unexpected positive outcome has been the engagement with the Building Management teams. The system has created a real sense of ownership and achievement within the teams and a fantastic working relationship with the Environmental Sustainability Team which has generated opportunities for other environmental improvement projects such as recycling and energy management. The scheme has also improved management of WEEE and other recycling by providing a communication platform. It has also supported management of building clearances to be more efficient with resources and time.

Another positive outcome which was not targeted initially has been the donations to local charitable organisations.

The future

Lessons learned

1. Consistent and sustained communication to maintain momentum after the initial launch using positive reinforcement with results
2. Ensuring the system is kept up to date and accurate is essential to ensure it remains effective and colleagues continue to engage with it
3. Embedding the process into existing systems and procedures, such as procurement will help ensure 'buy-in'

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

We are delighted our reUSE scheme has been recognised as an outstanding example of the benefits that can be realised, for the University in environmental and financial sustainability and our community. It is a real demonstration of sustainability as a key enabler of our University Strategic Plan and we are proud of the way our staff have embraced it.

Professor Helen Marshall, Vice-Chancellor

Further information

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