



Green Gown  
Awards 2016



Dissemination  
supported by:



# Finalist's case study

## Prifysgol Bangor University Best Newcomer

### The Sustainability Lab @ Bangor University

#### About the project

##### Summary

Bangor University aims to become in all aspects 'The Sustainable University', aiming for an international and best in class reputation for our commitment to sustainable development. Our ambition embraces not only the infrastructure and operation of University sites and operations, but also how the University plans for growth as well as our role as a leader of change for other institutions and organisations throughout Wales, the UK, and overseas. The Sustainability Lab, established in July 2015, provides focus and leadership for all aspects of the University's sustainability. We are developing our students and staff to become global citizens with an understanding of the challenges of achieving a sustainable, resilient world by empowering them to research and think strategically through complex problems to find balanced, workable solutions, all the while developing our institution holistically to inspire others to move towards sustainability with us.

#### Project partners

Staff, students, Senior Management, Undeb Bangor (Students' Union), local organisations and charities, ERDF funded projects, Makerere University (Uganda), Hub Cymru Africa and the Wales Audit Office.

#### The results

##### The problem

Prior to July 2015 there was no official 'corporate' level group with a mandate to embed sustainability across the University's function the many achievements and recognition were the result of a coalition of the willing and this needed to be recognized and formalized to reflect the growing commitment amongst our students and staff and as reflected in our Strategic Plan

##### The approach

As a relatively large academic and research institution, Bangor University has long held an aspiration to become 'The Sustainable University', but the questions always remained: How does a large public sector institution such as us go about this? What does it mean for an organisation such as ours to become 'sustainable' in the broadest sense? How do we meet the new challenges of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? Rather than impose a top-down solution and a set of rigid frameworks and regulation, we look to our people, giving support where necessary, to enable a 'coalition of the willing' to



PRIFYSGOL  
BANGOR  
UNIVERSITY



#### Profile

- Higher Education
- 11,000 students (includes full and part time students)
- 2000 staff
- Rural location



Green Gown Awards 2016



Dissemination supported by:



# Finalist's case study

continue driving sustainable development principles and actions throughout our activities. This 'bottom-up' approach has seen initiatives gain the traction that they need to succeed while avoiding potential unintended consequences from policy decisions that are removed from day-to-day operations or stakeholder expectations. The initial period of development has seen the University achieve ISO14001, multiple Green Dragon Awards to level 5, reach the top 5% of internationally recognised 'green' Universities, develop new assessment tools (independently reviewed as 'best in Europe'), and begin to embed sustainability across the curriculum and student experience. This success is evidenced in our institutional ambition, with the vision driven by staff, students and stakeholders, and embedded as a strategic driver throughout the new 2015-2020 strategic plan. Sustainability not only threads through our strategic plan, it is also one of the enablers.

## Our goals

The Sustainability Lab was established with a corporate, institution wide remit to embed Sustainability across the University to work with staff, students and the community (not to work 'for' or 'do sustainability' to anyone). This is a story of grass roots action evolving, with top level support in a way that is shaping the Sustainability and Well-being Strategy at Bangor University.

1. Successfully embed sustainability as a strategic driver throughout the new 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.
2. To firmly secure Bangor University's position as a leader in sustainable development in Wales and beyond through ensuring that sustainability is embedded in all its projects with external partners.
3. To develop an international portfolio of activities based on the sustainability expertise within The Sustainability Lab.

## Obstacles and solutions

Demonstrating strategic commitment	Ensure that sustainability was highly visible in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan with a commitment to establish the Sustainability Lab.
Identifying staff capacity and ensuring 'buy-in'	Appointing a 'student-staff' liaison officer and offering support to the 'willing' – e.g. subject-relevant guest lectures on sustainability.
Getting Schools and Colleges on board	Working with the early adopters and having the patience to stick to the 80:20 principle. The naysayers will always be there – ignore them.
Getting students on board	Collaborating closely with the Students Union through the Organising a range of student campaigns e.g. Pack for Good Regular Think Tank meetings Newsletters and social media.

## Performance and results

Some recent achievements for environmental and social impacts:

- Currently hold awards for Green Dragon level 5 and ISO 14001
- People & Planet 1st Class honors award and 'Best in Wales' (2 consecutive years)



Green Gown  
Awards 2016



Dissemination  
supported by:



# Finalist's case study

- In the top 5% greenest global Universities in the Green Metric
- Reduced energy associated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 8% (target 3%)
- Reduced total annual water use by 10.7% (target 2%)
- Zero pollution incidents (target was minimisation)
- On target for 20% reduction in vehicle business travel CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2016
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 1.6%
- Transforming the “cross-cutting themes” for businesses across eight EU-funded projects from tick box exercise to real benefit by embedding sustainability
- Sustainable business HealthCheck and Charter Mark recognised as ‘best in Europe’
- Around 850 businesses engaged with the Sustainable Business HealthCheck and committed to taking at least one “planet” or one “people” action
- SBBS Sustainable Business CharterMark awarded to 200 businesses
- Achieved Level 3 of the Public Sector Sustainable Procurement Action Framework
- Staff awareness sessions on sustainability and environmental management
- Annual energy saving, water pollution and flooding campaigns
- Development of curriculum reflects our commitment to sustainable development and global citizenship (new environmental management modules, MBA environmental management, widespread embedding of sustainability in the curriculum)
- Adopting a course specific approach with peer to peer promotion of the benefits
- Students and staff report that for the first time they feel included in ‘sustainability’
- Inclusion of environmental responsibilities requirements in all new job descriptions
- New collaborations with major international development organisations inspiring Makerere University, Uganda to implement sustainability across the institution and throughout their interactions with businesses and communities.

## The future

### Lessons learned

1. Having a mandate to lead is empowering – things happen when you have top level ‘permission’ to make them happen.
2. Be open minded and not too prescriptive, take time to work alongside people to identify a ‘win-win’ rather than a ‘do we have to’ response.
3. Accept that change is a process and focus on people who want to join in rather than spend time on those who actively resist.

### Sharing your project

The work of the Sustainability Lab has been widely disseminated on our social media platforms (see below), S-Lab website <http://planet.cymru/en/> and our newsletters [www.planet.cymru/en/newsletters/](http://www.planet.cymru/en/newsletters/), (published each semester) and all presentations and training sessions with staff and students. The work will continue to be promoted through the press, newsletters, presentations, blogs, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

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

The Sustainability Lab is generating interest and catalysing collaboration and involvement in all aspects of sustainability and well-being of future generations across campus. We are already seeing the impact of their



Green Gown  
Awards 2016



Dissemination  
supported by:



# Finalist's case study

work as leaders of change and delighted that being a Green Gown Award finalist recognises our progress towards being 'The Sustainable University'.

## Further information

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/planetdotcymru>

Web: <http://planet.cymru/en/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/planet.cymru/>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQU8LfdLnzRtX-KPix5xmlA>