



University of Birmingham Facilities and Services UniGreenScheme



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Profile

- Higher Education
- Over 33,000 students (includes UG and PG students)
- c 7000 staff
- Campus

In 2016 the University of Birmingham launched a pilot trial of UniGreenScheme. A completely new-to-market asset resale service for universities. The service was developed by a recent alumni of the university and was supported extensively by university staff.

Over 12 months, UniGreenScheme collected, stored and sold over 27,000kg of old equipment from the university campus. The university made £15,483 from sales and saved a further £29,071 in staff time.

Project partners

UniGreenScheme

The Asset Resale Service For Universities

The problem

Surplus equipment quickly accumulates in the facilities at the University of Birmingham as older equipment becomes outdated. With limited storage space, obsolete equipment cannot be stored indefinitely, and must be removed from facilities, but often the only option is disposal.

Disposing of working equipment is a waste of precious natural resources and financial value. The University of Birmingham was looking for an innovative alternative.

The approach

In 2016 an equipment resale service called UniGreenScheme, launched by a University of Birmingham student and extensively supported by university staff offered a potential solution. Surplus equipment would be collected and sold by UniGreenScheme then a profit share would be returned to the University.

Our goals

The goal was to turn a 'waste problem' into a resource and an opportunity. Equipment would be diverted away from the waste stream avoiding associated costs. Equipment would be re-used thus avoiding supply-chain CO2e of new manufacturing, and generating income from resale. The service would also provide other organizations including schools and start-up research companies the opportunity to buy equipment they might not otherwise be able to afford. Finally, the service would create jobs in the circular economy.

Obstacles and solutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting a resale contract in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 300 university staff from legal to procurement to health & safety provided critical guidance into the service to get a viable resale model in place.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is very difficult to value old equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UniGreenScheme don't 'buy' equipment: Instead a profit share is repaid after sale.

Delivered by





Finalist's case study



Performance and results

The University of Birmingham made £15,483 from sales and saved a further £29,071 in staff time and avoided disposal costs. Based on the data, UniGreenScheme could save the UK university sector £2.38m/year and the wider research industry £6.2m/year through its circular economy model.

CO2 savings

Please record the annual carbon savings* you have/will achieve with your initiative**.	
CO2t savings 2016/2017:	90,259 (State if Actual or Estimated)
CO2t savings 2017/2018:	130,429 (Estimated)
CO2t savings over the life cycle of the project:	195,000 (Actual/Estimated and over how much time?)

Lessons learned

There are many barriers to selling equipment from universities, but with a little innovative, and cooperation it is possible, and the benefits can be substantial.

Top 3 learnings from implementing your project

- Surplus equipment can be a valuable resource, and not just a waste disposal problem.
- There is a considerable market for used equipment, within the UK but also worldwide.
- Research equipment can take a long time to sell, but it is usually worthwhile.

Sharing your project

Since this pilot, UniGreenScheme has begun working with a number of universities including Oxford, Warwick, Loughborough and many more, and has expanded to research institutes, hospitals GP surgeries, dental practices and the private sector.

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

Being shortlisted for this prestigious award is a testament to all the hard work involved in developing and establishing our successful and innovative waste reduction scheme. It is a fantastic example of collaborative working and development of relationships with our entrepreneurial alumni

Further information

UniGreenScheme

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