



Sheffield Hallam University Facilities and Services

A Blueprint for Green Print - Sheffield Hallam University's Sustainable Printing Strategy

About the project

Summary

A strategy led by Digital Technology Services to reduce the amount of printing done by staff and students at Sheffield Hallam University wherever possible and, where printing is needed, to ensure it can be delivered in the most sustainable way.

Project partners

We worked with staff and students across the University including colleagues in our Sustainability team and with suppliers ITS and PaperCut.

The results

The problem

Much of the business of the University took place using hard copy documents. Back in 2010 we were printing more than 45 million sheets of paper at a huge cost to the University and the environment. We identified printing as one of our most significant environmental impacts during our work on the University-wide ISO 14001 Environmental Management System. In line with the University Strategy, Sheffield Hallam University's digital strategy aims to harness new technologies to work more sustainably.

The approach

We implemented a number of schemes designed to reduce the amount of printing through changing the staff and student approach to storing and working on documents. We worked with our suppliers to make improvements to their printing software and replaced less economical desktop printers with fewer and more efficient multi-function devices which used less energy and were cheaper to run.

Our goals

- To offer alternatives to printing
- To provide more efficient printers to save energy and ink
- To offer new ways of printing, reducing the amount of paper used.
- To improve our measurement of printing and provide tools so people could assess the cost of the printing they did.

Profile

- Higher Education
- 31,000 students (full and part time)
- 4,400 staff
- Urban and green campuses with satellite sports facilities



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Obstacles and solutions

- a) Habits can be hard to break but making people aware of the cost of printing and celebrating the savings we've made have helped us to change behaviours.
- b) Making changes to printing systems.

We knew we were printing vast amounts but had no management information	We centralised printing more and improved the statistics so we could assess where to focus our efforts
There were pockets of resistance to change and concerns about doing things differently	We engaged staff and students in the need for change and helped them understand the impact of the printing they did. We made sure communication was clear and dovetailed the changes with office moves and relocations.
Many of our processes revolved around hard-copy documents	We offered alternative ways to store and collaborate on documents and introduced new ways of processing information.
We found issues with some of the software we were running on our printers which caused paper to be wasted when there was an error on a printer.	We asked our suppliers for a solution and worked with them to develop and test it.

Performance and results

In 2016/17, we were able to demonstrate a 22.5% (>8 million) reduction in pages printed since 2013/14. It is estimated that the total pages saved during this period could cover the distance between Land's End and John O'Groats 4.3 times if laid end to end.

The future

Lessons learned

Habit change is easier to introduce when other changes are taking place too. We overcame resistance to replacing the numerous desktop printers people used in their offices by making the shift to MFD printers when staff were being relocated or buildings were refurbished. Often it's the idea of change more than the change itself that's the problem.

Good communication is essential. Staff needed enough warning to plan for the change. Instructions had to be concise enough to be read quickly but detailed enough to cover what might seem obvious to some but needed better explanation for other groups. It was important to explain the benefits too to engage staff in the strategy. Stressing the amount of wasted paper piled up at the end of the day (and the potential risk to confidentiality) helped to show the need to move to select and release.

One size does not fit all. We tested different options to save paper and ink and found that creating a default printing option that suited one group of people could mean another group had to reprint - having the opposite effect to the one we intended. People with bad eyesight or those who needed to proof read hard copy leaflets, for instance, required a different format from others. Getting feedback was important to fine tune the eventual Print Green settings and we made it 'opt in' rather than opt out.



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Top 3 learnings from implementing your project

- 1 Engage and communicate carefully and continually throughout the project - make instructions clear and listen to feedback.
- 2 Spell out the impact and give it high visibility to demonstrate the reasons for change.
- 3 The right support at the right time helps people adjust quickly.

Sharing your project

We're proud of the savings we've made and have promoted them internally at Sheffield Hallam through posters, blog posts, twitter and our staff intranet, and via our network of Green Champions. Our print team has met with staff in other Universities who want to learn from our success, and this blue print for green print could be used as a template by other institutions who want to ring the changes. Our suppliers have already rolled out the improvements we've helped them make to their software so their other customers have the benefit of the savings too.

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

Successfully meeting current global challenges can only be achieved through sustainable solutions. To be a Green Gown Finalist reflects the significant commitment we have made to practicing what we teach in terms of finding and implementing those solutions at Hallam and belongs to the entire Sheffield Hallam community.

Further information

SHU Sustainability;

- <https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-us/sustainability>
- [@SustainableSHU](#)