



Green Gown Awards 2017



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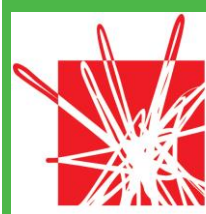
Finalist's case study



Southampton Solent University

Best Newcomer

Sorted at Solent: Changing habits in a HE environment to drive Sustainability



Southampton SOLENT University

Profile

- Higher education
- 11,000 staff and students
- City Centre campus

About the project

Summary

Sorted at Solent (in line with the Southampton Solent University's Environmental and Sustainability Strategy) has listened to staff and student feedback and revised its approach to tackling waste disposal across the campus and has reviewed opportunities to reuse and recycle where possible. Having reviewed the internal infrastructure the University was able to understand the needs of its end users and identify opportunities to promote sustainability and engage students. This approach enabled Southampton Solent University to push its recycling rates higher year on year.

Project partners

As well as involving students and staff at Southampton Solent University, we have utilised the knowledge, resources and efforts of various contract partners and their teams including cleaning (Noonan), waste (SUEZ), catering (Sodexo), maintenance (CBRE) and security (Senator Security South) to assist with the delivery of the project. We have also worked with the NUS on various projects and utilised their resources to drive student engagement, as well as encouraging students to provide feedback on the University's approach.

The results

The problem

Stagnating recycling rates were our main issue. Through analysis of recycling rates and various stakeholder feedback sessions identified that key barriers to improving recycling were 'knowledge and understanding' and 'waste facilitation'. This was reinforced by a student's final year dissertation's findings (facilitated by the Estates and Facilities team) which investigated recycling rates at Solent. These findings suggested that a key objective in our Environmental & Sustainability Strategy was not being fully utilised: Stakeholder engagement.

The approach

It can be very difficult for one project to target a mass audience and be effective. Therefore it was decided that as part of the overall project, we would create multiple smaller campaigns and initiatives to target niche audiences at specific locations. This saw each campaign / initiative have a different lead manager, who was able to dedicate more time to reach and engage their target audience.

Our goals

Each campaign has its own goals with the overall objective of increasing recycling rates across the University. These goals vary from education, raising awareness, minimising waste, behavioural change and creating responsible business leaders.



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Obstacles and Solutions

Resistance in behaviour changes – Engagement & strong communication (including roadshows, FAQ's & face to face contact) assisted with overcoming barriers.

Educating resident students - Peer to peer engagement through 'Residence Life Assistants' and by creating a competition with prizes. This has incentivised students to participate.

Different regional waste arrangements – By producing clear signage using WRAP iconography we help to provide a simple clear message to all on what can be recycled.

Performance and Results

With multiple campaigns and initiatives taking place during the 2016/17 academic year, we have seen an overall increase in recycling rates from 48% to 63% with an average recycling rate of 54% across the year. We have also seen significant gains in recycling from individual student areas as part of the 'Solent Sorts It' initiative. Following direct interaction with students to help educate them on correct use of waste streams, rates increased by 90%. Recycling & charitable giving is now the first option during key operational milestones (e.g. student departure) and during any significant refurbishment project. In 2016, the Chantry student residence was subject to a major refit of all student bedrooms. Numerous pieces of furniture were donated to several charities. Also 307 items from residences were donated via the charity collection receptacles for the British Heart Foundation.

The future

Lessons learned

Continuous review of statistics and feedback will help us ensure we are maintaining the best formula to maximise recycling and by building further on student based initiatives to also involve staff, it will help us to further push our recycling rates. The waste hierarchy must always be considered and opportunities seized where we can reuse and recycle or minimise prior to allowing future waste on to the campus.

Top 3 Learnings from implementing your project

- Listen to and interact with your stakeholders – The Solent Values of 'Inclusivity' & 'Engagement' has helped us to find a winning formula and we have been wowed by the level in engagement we have had from our students, staff and contract partners.
- Take guidance from those who know – The Solent Values of 'Teamwork' & 'Ownership' has assisted in the project's success. From working with staff who are at the 'coal-face', reviewing internal best practice to contract partners sharing their industry knowledge
- Continuous improvement models are key – From some local ideas we have now produced working schemes that span across the campus and has changed habits across the university.

Sharing your project

We have built and expanded on our own best practice approach by replicating the Solent Sorts It campaign across the University, enabling us to see what areas are in need of further action. Our new 'Spark' building became our trial location to check that results were achieved. This standard then became the campus benchmark. We have shared information and advice about our waste stream review with another Hampshire University. We provided advice and examples of how we implemented the project, barriers and opportunities. We work closely with SUEZ to develop new ways of educating and monitoring and our success has been shared with the South Coast Affinity Group (SCAG). We hope our work with will lead to further positive results in the HE sector.

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

"Being a finalist in the Green Gown Awards is a fantastic endorsement for the University and gives recognition to everyone who plays their part in enabling Solent to reduce its environmental impact"

Professor Graham Baldwin, Vice-Chancellor, Southampton Solent University

Further information

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