

Sharing Series

Student Reuse Projects

Institutions are responsible for a variety of waste that falls outside of traditional recycling collections, which creates a huge opportunity for reuse projects. Students can provide innovative ways of repurposing these items, whilst gaining skills both through the actual repurposing but also in the management of such initiatives. Diverting this waste from landfill contributes to a reduction in the environmental impact of both individuals and the whole institution, as well as providing a positive social benefit by making low- or no-cost items available to the beneficiaries of the scheme.

Items for Reuse

- End of term waste
- E-waste
- Food
- Institutional waste (Pallets, equipment)
- Textiles (Clothing, Bedding)

Forms of Reuse Projects

- End of term collections for Fresher's week reuse shops or charity
- Swap shops
- Library of things
- Tool Library
- Student skill reuse projects, involving students in repurposing goods such as e-waste or bicycles and gaining skills from this. There is curriculum potential for this as well. (Read [Perth College UHI student E-waste](#) project)

Growing a Student Reuse Culture

To help grow and sustain a reuse culture, students must be provided with a safe space where they can create and manage projects fairly independently. Ensuring students have ownership of any projects is key to longevity and commitment, particularly when relying on volunteers. This could be as simple as assigning a room or warehouse for a student reuse project, or offering a small pot of funding to get an initiative up and running. Engaging with environmental and zero waste groups within the organisation or wider community and students studying relevant subjects will identify initial volunteers or interest.

Monitoring and Reporting

To effectively monitor the variety of goods diverted from landfill you must establish categories of items, then weigh each and calculate carbon from this. The [Scottish Government carbon conversion rates](#) are updated yearly and provide a framework for these calculations. Ensure the data is made useful by sharing with estates and communications teams within the institution to be used in internal reports and promotion of sustainability initiatives.

Challenges

- Administration, monitoring and sorting items is time consuming
- Maintaining volunteer interest and availability
- Storage and sorting space
- Finding good quality items

Financial Support

- Funding for social enterprise or climate action supporters (such as the [Climate Challenge Fund](#) in Scotland)
- A 'Pay as you feel' system can be used in 'give-aways'. Ask shoppers what they feel the items would be worth, and therefore how much they have saved, and hint that they can pay a small fee considering these savings if they are able
- Highlight to institutions and through reporting and communications channels the money saved on waste collections due to the reuse systems available, to win more support



Information gathered through *Integrating Sustainability in Student Reuse Project Sharing Series*, including presentations from [SHRUB Edinburgh](#) and [St AndRe-Use](#)

[Visit the EAUC-S Sharing Series Webpage](#)

