

# Finalist's case study

## University of Edinburgh Food and Drink

### University of Edinburgh's Vision for Sustainable Food

#### Section 1 About the project

##### Summary

Recognising the responsibility and influence of the University and the interconnectedness of global challenges surrounding food, the University aims to contribute to the improvement of society as a whole by the creation of sustainable food systems, through the great work done by Accommodation Services and by student and staff initiatives. As of February 2014 the University was leading the way in Scotland, accounting for almost 50% of all Food for Life certified meals in Scotland.

##### Project partners

The University has collaborated with a range of community groups and national organisations in working towards its SRS goals.

#### Section 2 The results

##### The problem

The University's mission statement highlights the commitment to "make a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to Scotland, the UK and the world, promoting health, economic growth and cultural wellbeing." The University aims to work towards this by contributing towards a sustainable food system.

##### The approach

The University takes a pro-active approach to reducing food, increase sustainability and ethical benefits associated with catering. Whilst ensuring that catering works towards set out healthy and sustainable agendas, catering at the University is managed on the basis that "All student and staff catering must operate cost effectively, be self-financing and obtain no subsidy".

##### Our goals

The University's vision for sustainable food is world leading, as it supports the institution's aim to improve its environmental impact, support fair trade, and actively engage staff and students with these issues, whilst delivering effective procurement for the institution. The University aims to contribute to the improvement of society as a whole by the creation of sustainable food systems, through the great work done by Accommodation Services and by student and staff initiatives.



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

##### Profile

- HEI
- Over 31,000 students and 10,000 staff
- Six campus locations spread across Edinburgh
- Ranked 17th best university in the world

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## Obstacles and solutions

Informing Students	Visible materials, including posters and stickers, have been used in catering outlets and catered accommodation to raise awareness, as well as face to face engagement campaigns.
Staff Awareness	Staff were provided with a better understanding of how procurement decisions made by the University has on the local community and wider world to staff.

## Performance and results

Activities have already been undertaken to support this visions include; Becoming the first “Food For The Brain” University in the UK, All catering outlets hold the “Healthy Living Award” which is managed by “Consumer Focus” on behalf of the Scottish Government, Achieving a Food for Life Bronze Catering Mark for the John McIntyre Centre at Pollock Halls in 2012 and for 12 catering outlets across campus in 2014, Introduced cook school for first year undergraduates at Pollock Halls before they move into independent living in flats, A deal with Just Trading Scotland which ensures that rice consumed at the University comes from fair trade sustainable sources in Malawi, Facilitating cooking workshops in self-catered accommodation for students.

Accommodation Services holds the “Food For Life Catering Mark” at Bronze level for all student meals served in catered halls which number over 750,000 meals served over the academic year, as well as for 12 catering retails outlets on campus, which adds an additional 115,000 items. As at February 2014, the University of Edinburgh Accounted for almost 50% of all Food For Life Certified meals consumed in Scotland.

Students have now taken an active role in promoting Sustainable Food at the University. The Hearty Squirrel Co-Operative, Fairtrade Café and the Allotment Society all are working in collaboration with staff, resulting in positive outcomes. The Food Researchers in Edinburgh (FRiED) network has recently been established at the University, complementing the operational aspects of sustainable food.

## Section 3 The future

### Lessons learned

- 1 Recognise the impact the decisions made by the University has on the local community and wider world.
- 2 The need to proactively inform students about sustainable food, highlighting where their food has come from in catered halls.
- 3 Important to proactively promote the initiatives that your institutions are progressing to students, raising awareness and winning support to further efforts.

### Sharing our project

We report our progress through annual highlights reports, providing information progress against the strategy ([www.ed.ac.uk/about/sustainability/what-we-do/governance-reporting/strategy-reporting](http://www.ed.ac.uk/about/sustainability/what-we-do/governance-reporting/strategy-reporting)). As a founding member of the EAUC, we continue to provide leadership and support to EAUC Scotland. The University is actively engaged with the Soil Association, sharing best practice with other sectors.

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

The University of Edinburgh is committed to being a world-leading socially responsible and sustainable university. We value working with other institutions as we support our staff and students in improving our own practices. Public recognition gives us an opportunity to celebrate and reward their enthusiasm and hard work.

**Professor Mary Bownes, Senior Vice-Principal – External Engagement**



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## Further information

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