



Green Gown  
Awards 2014

AWARDING SUSTAINABILITY EXCELLENCE FOR 10 YEARS

# Finalist's case study

Sponsored by  
**CISCO** **BT**  
Working together



Dissemination  
supported by:  
**hefce**  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL  
FOR ENGLAND

## University of Strathclyde Facilities and Services

### Source segregation; creating a culture of 'zero waste'

#### Summary

The University of Strathclyde Material Resource Strategy achieves 100% diversion from landfill and a 90% material recycling rate. We have eliminated general waste bins and reduced baseline waste mass per FTE by 15%. This step change - led by departments and driven by students - has embedded a 'zero waste' culture across our institution.

#### Project partners

Zero Waste Scotland generously supported the first phase of our recycling infrastructure roll out by providing grant funding for source segregated collection containers in all building entrances, gardens and grounds.

MSc Students from our Environmental Entrepreneurship and Environmental Studies & Sustainability courses evaluated our material segregation practices, quantified cross contamination and developed improved recycling signage.

#### Our goals

To achieve 'zero waste' from all activities by 2015.

#### The problem

In 2011 the university piloted their first segregated recycling system. Although successful, the system relied heavily on off-site recovery and did not create the attitudinal change required in students and staff to achieve 'zero waste'. Lessons learned on infrastructure, contractor management and student and staff engagement informed a revised approach to material recovery.

#### Our approach

##### Infrastructure

In 2013 we began increasing the number and type of segregated collection containers for food waste, paper, plastic packaging, metals/foils, glass and non-recyclables. Segregated centralized recycling stations were made accessible to all students and office staff. Food and glass containers were introduced in all kitchens and eating areas. Segregated recycling stations were installed on all public grounds and pavements. Paper collection trays were placed on all staff desks.



#### Profile

- Urban
- Higher Education
- 15,700 FTE students
- UK Entrepreneurial University of the Year 2013/14
- UK University of the Year 2012/13
- 2,930 FTE staff

Category supported by

**sodexo**  
QUALITY OF LIFE SERVICES

[www.green gown awards.org.uk](http://www.green gown awards.org.uk)

Delivered by  
**eauc**

# Finalist's case study

## Engagement

The key to our success is the engagement of Heads of Departments (HOD). A student 'Environmental Coordinator' role was created to lead face to face HOD engagement and facilitate student and staff consultation. Our strong focus on staff engagement enabled more effective roll out of new segregated recycling facilities, taking on board departmental concerns and specific requirements. This approach significantly reduced contention surrounding the removal of desk side waste bins.

## Student Learning

In 2013 and 2014 the Business School and Civil Engineering created student/Estates partnership projects within the Environmental Entrepreneurship and Environmental Studies MSc curriculum. Students, competitively appointed, integrated their own research into University Waste Strategy development e.g. student engagement, signage effectiveness, contract management, material contamination, operational efficiency.

## Obstacles and solutions

<b>Removing desk side general waste bins</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated environmental coordinator to lead staff communication</li> <li>• Direct face to face engagement with Heads of Department (HOD)</li> <li>• An engagement process rooted in adaptive management</li> </ul>
--	---

## Performance and results

- **Culture Change:** from 'one bin no questions' to proactive source segregation. Disposal is now a thought process.
- **Landfill Diversion** increased from 0% to 100%
- **Material Recycling rate** increase from near 0% to 90%
- **Waste Mass per FTE** reduced 15% from 35kg to 29kg p.a.
- **Cost savings** of £12,400 p.a. achieved; £27,400 p.a. in progress

## Lessons learned

Source segregation is 10% about bins and 90% about people and communication.

## Sharing our project

We have worked with our communications office to develop a short video promoting the outcomes of our waste audit and to disseminate good practice about correct material segregation procedures on campus. In 2014 a delegation of students and staff presented a workshop at the 2014 EAUC Annual Conference on engaging students and staff on recycling strategy.

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

"We are delighted to be shortlisted for a prestigious Green Gown award. The shortlisting provides well-earned recognition of the efforts of our students and staff who have driven positive change to meet our challenging zero-waste objectives".  
(Dean Drobot – Energy and Environment Manager)

## Further information

More information on the Strathclyde approach to Zero Waste can be found online at  
<http://www.strath.ac.uk/estates/recycling/>