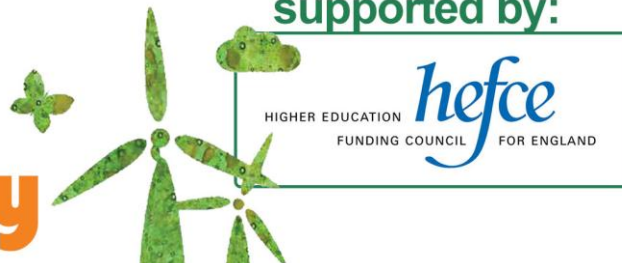




Green Gown
Awards 2013

Finalist's case study

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University of York Facilities and Services

The fresh, fast and local food procurement project

Section 1 About the project

Summary

The University of York was keen to deliver sustainability and minimise waste being sent off to landfill sites, while simultaneously introducing a healthier campus menu by sourcing 'Fresh, Fast and Local Food', boosting the local economy and decreasing food miles. Since the project has been underway, the university has identified a better environmental disposal option for large waste systems and reduced landfill waste by 57 per cent. Students and staff continue to contribute to the project's success by using dedicated recycling bins, ultimately saving the university money that can be diverted back into resources that allow the collection of greater quantities of recycled materials.

Project partners

Both university staff and students fully participated in the Carbon Reduction project, while the new waste strategy was introduced by Estates and Campus services in 2012. Local suppliers are sourcing produce from local farmers and are also being encouraged to establish their own sustainability agendas.

Section 2 The results

The problem

Before the project began, the university realised that around 25 per cent of its total landfill waste was made up of food and that there was a definite need for focus on sustainability. Food was being wasted in the kitchens where chefs were preparing frozen and processed foods in bulk and throwing away unwanted leftovers, while failure to purchase food from local sources was resulting in unnecessary food miles and a lack of fresh cuisine.

The approach

The university's approach to sustainability is based upon the Five Capitals sustainable development model: Natural, Human, Social, Economical and Financial. These processes involve sourcing produce locally and minimising the number of food miles covered, delivering a healthy balanced diet to all customers, creating effective working relationships with suppliers and utilising all capital assets through university processes to boost the local economy. All cash savings made are reinvested into the university. Sustainability is now included as a measured criteria in all contract awards.

THE UNIVERSITY of York
Directorate of Commercial Services



Profile

- HE
- 14,700 FT and PT students
- 2000 staff
- Urban

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Making every day a better day



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Our goals

The aim of setting these standards is to make a contribution to a healthy diet amongst staff and students, support a thriving and competitive food industry, promote high animal health and welfare standards and deliver improving environmental impact throughout the lifecycle of the produce. The university has established a 10-year sustainability plan that details each of these important aims in greater depth, and the Carbon Reduction project is crucial to seeing that our goals are met.

Obstacles and solutions

There is only so much fresh, local produce that can be purchased. Suppliers of 'processed foods' will also need to be assessed for their sustainability principals. Food miles will become an important evaluation criteria.

The project also had to consider the implications of catering waste. There is a Waste Oil recycling contract in place and the catering function recycles thousands of litres of oil each year. This eliminates waste that generally pollutes water, lowers costs in the treatment of waste water, reduces deterioration of drainage systems and reduces the dependence of energy from overseas. Food waste is also dealt with, working with Yorwaste to ensure waste is collected and sent for conversion to bio-fuel.

Performance and results

Food is now sourced locally and cooked fresh to order, a solution that has helped to decrease food wastage and reduce the university's food miles by 31,000. As a result of our new menu offering a number of fresh dishes, food sales have increased too, thereby helping to boost the local economy. The introduction of recycling bins has helped to boost recycling rates with up to nine tonnes of unwanted food being collected each month, which is subsequently processed into fuel and fertiliser at a local anaerobic digestion plant. General bin waste is now screened at a materials recycling facility where non-recycled waste is converted into fuel pellets. Over ten tonnes of unwanted clothes have also been collected and donated to the British Heart Foundation.

Section 3 The future

Lessons learned

In the future, the university hopes to continue to use the money saved from the Carbon Reduction scheme to invest in more mixed recycling bins and encourage more students and staff members to recycle their waste. With the successful implementation of recycling policies, nothing need go to waste. The internal publicity surrounding our efforts has also helped to make recycling a community project, thereby further assisting the spread and adoption of recycling practices.

Sharing your project

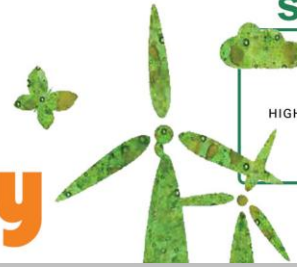
The University of York understands that our efforts alone aren't enough to prevent climate change and resource depletion here in the UK, which is why it's important for other academic establishments to implement their own carbon reduction projects in future. If your university is undertaking a project of its own, then the Green Gown Awards website is the perfect place to share it. We intend to upload our own promotional video to various online resources so that others can learn from our example and to spread the word of our achievements.



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

The University of York is thrilled that our efforts have been recognised by the Green Gown Awards and acknowledged alongside a number of other extremely commendable colleges and universities. Above all we are keen to use our finalist status as an incentive to push our scheme even further and gain even greater results as we continue to increase our sustainability efforts.

Further information

The University of York aims to continue our sustainability efforts in future, striving to achieve greater results and meet our goals further down the line. To find out more about our sustainability efforts and the continued work of the Carbon Reduction project, contact us at:

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www.greengownawards.org.uk

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