

UWS Sustainability Annual Report

2017/18



Blantyre Muir Windfarm - Providing carbon neutral energy to UWS Lanarkshire

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WEST *of* SCOTLAND

UWS

Introduction

This Sustainability Annual Report demonstrates progress in 2017/18, detailing a range of projects under the key themes detailed in the UWS Sustainability Plan. The report highlights the commitment across the UWS Community to reduce carbon emissions and improve environmental sustainability.

It is an exciting time for Sustainability at UWS, particularly with our new Lanarkshire campus development completed at the end of the reporting year. Designed with inspiring and flexible learning and teaching spaces, the campus provides staff and students access to some of the most modern university facilities in the UK.

Our new campus is also a sustainable space for sustainable minds, carbon neutral for energy, toilets fed by rain water harvesting, electric fleet vehicles and secure cycle parking are some of the eco features significantly reducing our carbon footprint.



Student Success

Student Volunteering: 16 students volunteered to carry out this years UWS Green Impact Team Audits. Green Impact is an NUS Behaviour Change programme where staff teams embed sustainability across activity. Students then audit the teams workbooks and score the teams from bronze to platinum.

One of the student auditors, Matilde Lerga Manzano, shared her experience with staff through a presentation at the 2018 UWS Green Impact Awards. Including the following highlights:

Gain knowledge and transferable skills in: Auditing, analysis and assessment of information; Sustainability in practice; communication in a professional setting; and team working.

Student Auditor Quotes:

“An informative & interesting challenge, that provided skills for life!”

“I had a fantastic time and loved being part of such a positive movement.”

“It was fun and enjoyable, not something that you can do everyday to make a green impact on society.”

“A worthwhile and interesting experience that gives a real insight into the problems (and solutions) of sustainability”.



Pictured: Student volunteers who carried out audits on UWS Green Impact team workbooks. All auditors received certified Institute of Environmental Management audit training.

Sustainability Research

UWS Research and Enterprise awards in 17/18, relating to Sustainability, totalled £3.1M from 61 awards. These varied from working with women's groups in Uganda, identifying the critical factors for building manufacturing capability for craft women to vulnerability and adaptation to climate change in Scottish island communities.

Case Study: Vulnerability and adaptation to climate change in Scottish island communities.

Adaptation to climate change is recognised as an important policy issue from the EU down to national and local government levels. Remote islands are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise, changing weather patterns and their impacts on storminess, coastal erosion, and flooding. Moreover, the particular nuanced contexts of remote rural settings can compound this physical vulnerability, a layer of vulnerability that is not considered in the typical climate change impact studies.



The aim for this studentship is to develop a climate change adaptation assessment framework suited to participation, integration and collaboration in the context of remote rural island communities.

Methodologically the study will depend on building engagement with the residents and communities in the selected island locations in order to access and elucidate their perspectives on climate vulnerability and adaptation options. Qualitative data collection and analysis of interviews and other stakeholder-focussed activities are envisaged as being a key part of this. Community engagement work will also be informed by analysis of existing climatic records and of climate change projections.

Additionally, we are interested to explore how engagement and data collection activities may be enhanced and indeed fundamentally altered by contemporary geospatial technologies, which are opening new avenues for data collection, presentation and collaboration. Two areas of interest are identified - firstly uses of Internet and GPS-enabled mobile personal devices for field mapping and data collection, and secondly, ongoing developments in the integration of maps with qualitative approaches, notably in the form of 'story mapping'.

Green Gown Award Finalist



UWS was shortlisted as a finalist in the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges Green Gown Awards in the category of Sustainability Champion of the Year for the work David Johnston, Depute Director of Information Technology, and his team implemented on travel reduction. Inspired by participation in the UWS Green Impact programme, the team developed an initiative involving software solutions and agile working to significantly reduce the requirement to travel, reducing carbon, costs and staff time.

The team looked at why they were travelling and also modes of travel. Through the use of technology, colleagues can carry out the majority of their remit remotely; Jabber allows them to instant message, receive phone calls to their normal direct dial number; VPN allows access to all PC drives and software; and Webex allows the user to attend meetings remotely. The department decided they would lead by example and put in place a requirement that, unless necessary, all departmental inter campus meetings should be carried out remotely through this technology, rather than in person.

Outcomes:

- 59,731 Kg CO2e saved
- 9657 hours saved
- 202,354 miles saved

The initiative has further benefits in improving the work life balance of the team. Reducing travel by car reduces CO2, congestion and demand on over stretched parking resources. Cycle to Work was also promoted as a preferred mode of travel, increasing health and fitness, saving money on fuel and having positive team building benefits as we grow a cycling community.

Money and Infrastructure

Climate Change Adaptation

Extreme weather and climate change threaten to damage UWS premises and interfere with the systems we rely on for day-to-day business continuity. Interruptions to transport, power and communications infrastructure may disrupt our core functions. Managing our weather and climate change risks, through adaptation, makes good business sense. To help avoid the costs and consequences of extreme weather and climate change we have developed the UWS Climate Ready Adaptation Plan.



Developing and implementing our Plan allows us to understand our vulnerability to current and future climate change, to recognise and assess the risks and also to identify research opportunities to further advance knowledge and understanding of our changing climate. Our plan is a clear demonstration that we are prepared to contribute to Scotland's adaptation commitments, and to increase the resilience of our university.

Eco-Campus Environmental Management System



In order to formalise our approach to environmental management UWS successfully applied for an Eco-Campus Bronze award. This is a formal accredited, externally verified, Environmental Management System. This award recognises UWS commitment to Environmental Sustainability and ensures we have the appropriate management and monitoring structures in place to successfully manage and mitigate our environmental impacts.

Carbon Reduction Target

UWS is committed to reducing carbon and mitigating our impact on the environment. An ambitious corporate target was set to reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent by 2019/20 (compared with the 2012/13 baseline). The footprint includes carbon emissions related to energy, gas, business travel, water and waste for our four Scottish campuses. The 2017/18 footprint was 8254 tonnes of carbon, a 5% reduction on the previous year and a 25% reduction on the 2012/13 baseline. This exceeds our 2020 target for the second year in a row. The UWS Lanarkshire Campus with carbon neutral energy facilities will have a further positive impact on our carbon emissions in the year ahead.



The UWS Sustainability Plan can be viewed at:

www.uws.ac.uk/about-uws/uws-commitments/sustainability