

Annual Performance Report 2023 - 24 Environmental Sustainability

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the University of Hertfordshire Environment and Sustainability Annual Performance Report 2023 -24. The reporting period covers 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024, an eventful year shaped by notable developments and challenges in the environmental sustainability landscape, both globally and at the University of Hertfordshire.

GLOBAL CONTEXT

From August 2023 to July 2024, the global environmental landscape was marked by intensifying climate impacts and increasing momentum toward addressing the climate crisis. Extreme weather events—including record-breaking heatwaves, wildfires, and flooding—highlighted the urgent need for climate adaptation. Internationally, key milestones such as COP28 in Dubai placed a strong emphasis on accelerating the transition to renewable energy and scaling up climate finance for vulnerable nations. Meanwhile, biodiversity protection remained a priority following the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, with countries working to meet ambitious targets for ecosystem restoration and conservation.

UK CONTEXT

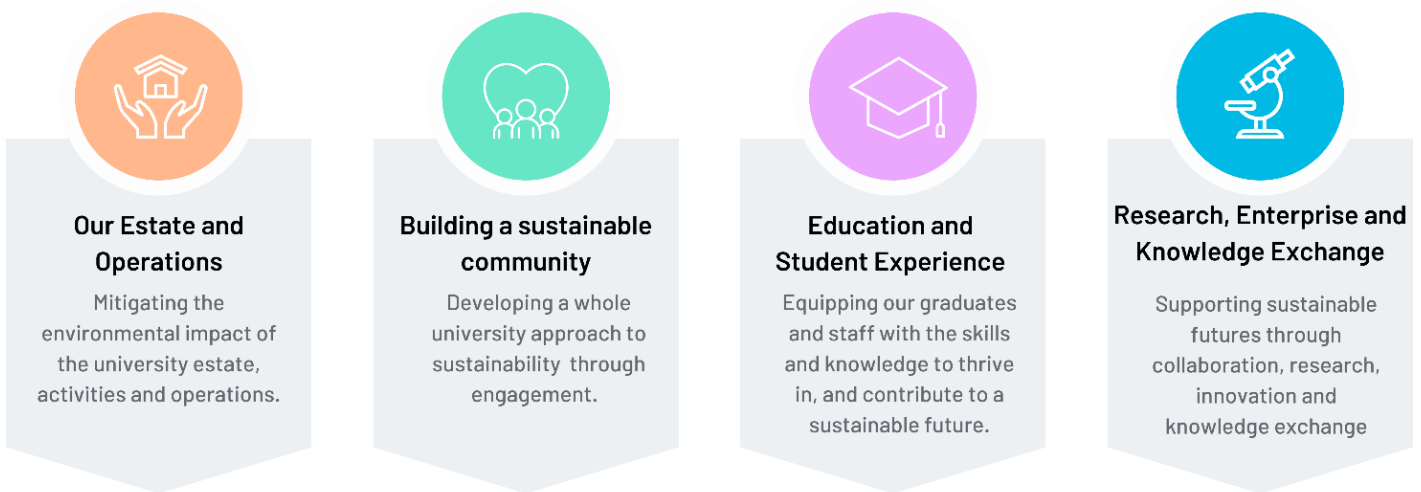
In the UK, the reporting period saw a mix of environmental progress and challenges. Extreme weather events, including summer heatwaves and winter floods, underscored the growing impacts of climate change. Nationally, the UK Government updated its Net Zero Strategy, focusing on energy security and decarbonisation of key sectors such as transport and buildings. However, debates over the pace of transition, particularly around fossil fuel projects and green energy investments, sparked public and political discussion. The UK also continued efforts to restore biodiversity through initiatives aligned with the Environment Act and commitments to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030.

HE SECTOR CONTEXT

Across the higher education sector, the reporting period reflected growing efforts to integrate sustainability into institutional strategies and operations. Universities increasingly aligned with national net zero targets, focusing on decarbonising estates, promoting climate research, and embedding sustainability in curricula. The Higher Education Climate Action Toolkit and guidance from the Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education provided institutions with frameworks to accelerate progress. Collaboration between universities and local authorities on biodiversity, energy efficiency, and climate adaptation became more prominent, while institutions faced growing pressure from students and staff to divest from fossil fuels and improve reporting on environmental impacts.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY AT UH

2023-24 marked a significant period of implementation for many of the objectives outlined in the 2023–2028 Environment and Sustainability Framework, and according to the pathways as described below:



Within Estates, dedicated working groups and targeted action plans were established to reduce the environmental impact of the university's estate, activities, and operations, with a focus on the following key impact areas:

- Carbon and climate change
- Waste and resource management
- Biodiversity

The Engagement Team continued to provide opportunities for staff and students to engage with sustainability initiatives, fostering a stronger, more connected sustainable community.

Also relevant to this report are changes in the number of staff and students, as well as the size of the campus. Staff and student numbers, measured as FTE equivalent, remained largely unchanged for the period, growing only by 1% compared to the previous year, but still representing a 50% increase on 2018/19 baseline figures. Our campus Gross Internal Area (GIA) remained largely unchanged at 192,879 m³.

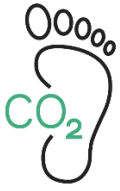
KEY PROGRESS UPDATES

1. Successful ISO14001 recertification audit with no non-conformances or opportunities for improvement identified.
2. Working groups established for waste, biodiversity, decarbonisation, and travel
3. Scope 1 & 2 emission reductions of **25 %** against 2018/19 baseline
4. **4 %** reductions in emissions from energy compared to previous year
5. **26 %** reduction in emissions from energy compared to 2018/19 baseline
6. **51 %** reduction in emissions from energy per FTE compared to 2018/19 baseline
7. **3 %** increase in scope 1 & 2 emissions against previous year, largely due to emissions from Uno Bus diesel
8. **9 %** increase in emissions from procurement compared to previous year, largely driven by capital goods
9. **2 %** increase in emissions from procurement per FTE since 2019/20
10. **68 %** of suppliers possess a climate plan or equivalent
11. Stable water consumption, remaining at **38 %** lower than baseline period 2018/19
12. **13 %** increase in total waste, 12% increase per FTE
13. Reduction in recycling rates from 61% to **57 %** compared to the previous period
14. **8 %** reduction in total waste against 2018/19 baseline.
15. **100s** of businesses, local residents and school children engaged in the Sustainability Hub at the Festival of Ideas.
16. **Big Hog-Friendly Litter Picking** national champions (university category).
17. Successful Green Teams Challenge with **12 SBUs** organising over **100 green events**.
18. Sustainability Advocates completed over **1465 hours** of volunteering between them.
19. 542 members of staff engaged with over the period
20. 2743 students engaged with over the period
21. Up **7** places in People and Planet League table to 71st (2:2)
22. **108** collaborations with external stakeholders
23. All programmes now mapped against the graduate attribute: **sustainability-driven**

More detail on these achievements can be found in relevant sections of this report.

OUR ESTATE AND OPERATIONS

CLIMATE CHANGE



In 2023 we signed up to the United Nations Race to Zero campaign and published our [Net Zero Action Plan](#), detailing our commitments and road map to reaching Net Zero by 2050. By adopting an integrated approach and setting ambitious targets, the University aims to reduce its carbon impact in line with science-based targets while empowering positive action within the community. Progress against our carbon targets are summarised below, for more details on our achievements and plans in each of the areas.

Objective: Reduce the impact of university operations and estate on climate change.

➤ **Target:** To become Net Zero by 2050 at the latest, with a 50% reduction by 2028, and a 78% reduction by 2035 against our 2018/19 baseline (Scope 1 & 2).

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2023/24, the University of Hertfordshire emitted **12,776 tonnes of CO₂e**. While this represents a 3% increase on the previous period, emissions are still down 25% from the baseline levels, and down 50% when staff and student numbers are considered.

EMR & KPI	18 / 19	19 / 20	20 / 21	21 / 22	22 / 23	23 / 24
Carbon Scope 1 & 2 - tCO₂e	17,044.80	13,487.66	12,044.50	13,591.05	12,389.23	12,775.79
change against baseline		-21%	-29%	-20%	-27%	-25%
Year on year		-21%	-11%	13%	-9%	3%
Carbon (kg CO ₂) / FTE	848.7	641.26	527.67	531.65	415.45	422.83
change against baseline		-24%	-38%	-37%	-51%	-50%
change year on year		-24%	-38%	-37%	-51%	2%
carbon (kg CO ₂) / m ²	91.26	71.13	62.59	70.34	64.31	66.08
change against baseline		-22%	-31%	-23%	-30%	-28%

The scope 1 & 2 emissions reported above include:

- Energy (Gas and electricity)
- Fuel (UNO Bus and UH-owned vehicles (postage and portering – PP))

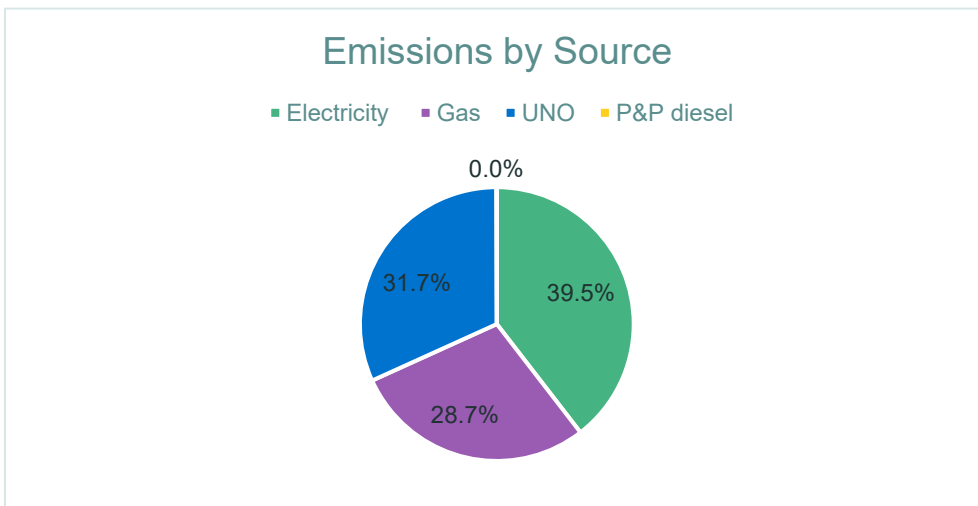


Figure 1 2023-24 Scope 1 & 2 distribution by source (excluding F-Gas)

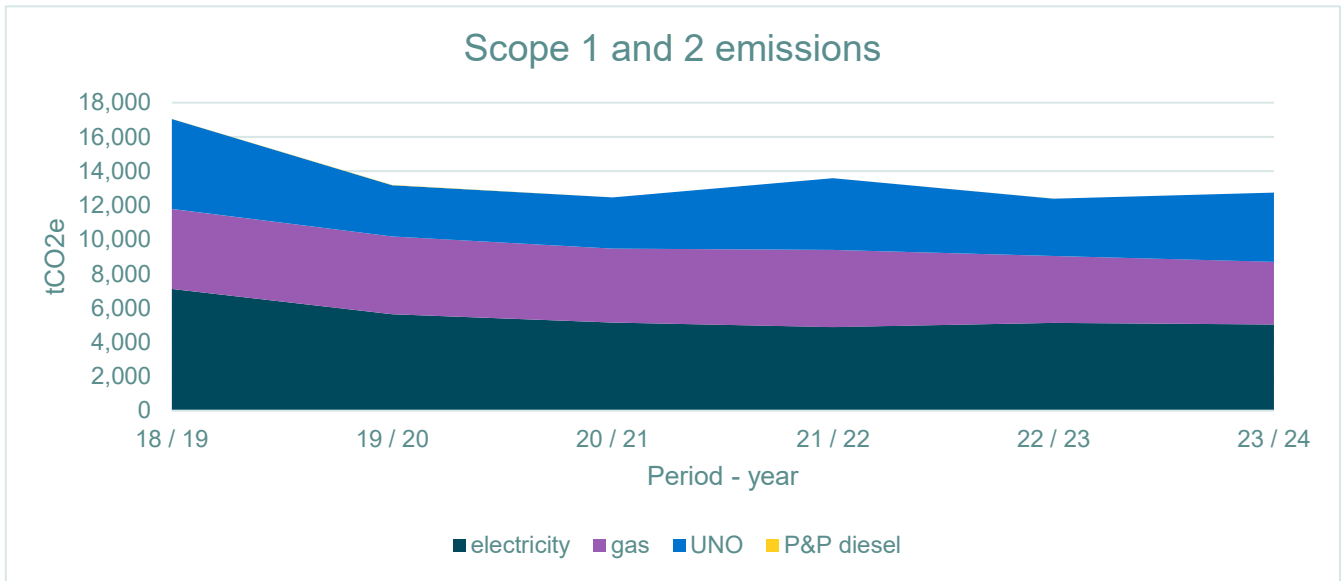


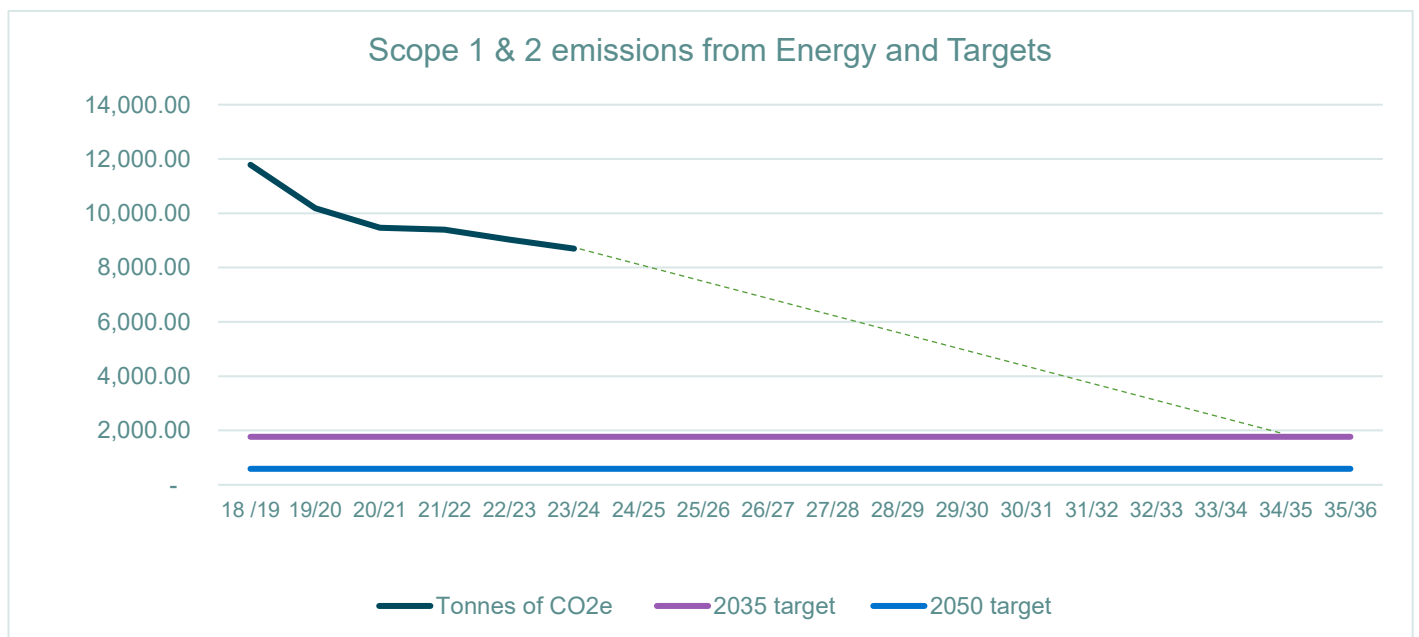
Figure 2 -2023-24 Scope 1&2 emissions since baseline period

As seen in *Figure 2*, electricity still accounts for the largest share of emissions at 39% (5,040 tonnes of CO²e), although emissions from both gas and electricity have fallen slightly since last year. The increase in overall scope 1 and 2 emissions for this period is largely due to UNO. Overall, we are making good progress towards our interim targets as can be seen below. More detail on how each area is progressing to help meet our targets can be found in the sections below.

ENERGY

Objective: Reduce the demand for energy and improve energy efficiency on campus.

➤ **Target:** To achieve reductions in carbon from energy against our 2018/19 baseline of 85% by 2035 and 95% by 2050.



Emissions from energy have fallen 25% against the baseline period 2018/19, and by 4% compared to the previous period. This reduction is largely attributed to decreased electricity and gas consumption, which is particularly

noteworthy given that the SPECTRA building was completed toward the end of this period, coinciding with the outgoing SPECS accommodation being fully operational.

The reduction in both electricity and gas consumption has been enabled by the technical, operational, and behaviour change interventions and initiatives undertaken during this period, such as:

- LED lighting improvements on College Lane and in the Sports Village
- Improvements to the College Lane boiler house
- LRC shutdowns during holidays
- Energy and insulation improvement works in Mercer
- Installation of air-source heat pump in the Eston auditorium
- Energy audits awareness campaigns
- Implementation of new Heating and Cooling policy

LOOKING AHEAD

We will continue to reduce emissions from energy in line with our Estate Decarbonisation Plan. Having identified the main sources of emission, and carried out feasibility studies on campus, we have identified a number of projects that will continue to reduce emissions from energy:

- Design and build all-electric new buildings
- Installing air source heat pumps or alternative low-carbon technology in campus buildings
- Solar PV technology for the Sports Village (HSV)
- Continue with the roll-out of LED lighting across campus
- Upgrade campus-wide building management systems including remote management

It is worth noting that as we continue to electrify the estate and move away from gas, the electricity consumption is likely to increase over the next few years. The overall impact from energy should continue to decline however, especially as the grid continues to decarbonise.

FUEL - UNOBUS & UH FLEET

Objective: Reduce the impact of our transport and logistics operations on the environment

Emissions from university-owned ICE (internal combustion engines) vehicles contribute to our scope 1 carbon footprint. At the University of Hertfordshire, there are 2 main sources of scope 1 fuel emissions: Uno Bus and university-owned vehicles.

UNO BUS

In 2023-24, UNO Bus carried 3.4 million passengers across 3.9 million km of road. While helping to significantly reduce regional emissions from private travel (it is estimated that 1 bus can replace up to 30 cars on the road¹), the fuel from UNO Bus operations is considered as scope 1 emissions and is therefore included in our reporting.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
tCO ² e	5,260	-	-	4,185	3,354	4,044
change against baseline	-	-	-	-20%	-36%	-23%

¹ ACEA - European Automobile Manufacturers' Association "[Buses: what they are and why they are so important](#)"

CO2e emissions from UNO Bus operations have fallen steadily, and in 23/24 emissions were down by 23% against the 2018/19 baseline.

LOOKING AHEAD

UNO Bus is committed to reducing emissions from its operations over the coming years and have set a target to reach Net Zero by 2050 at the latest. A UNO Bus Decarbonisation Roadmap is being developed and will be published soon.

As part of this commitment, UNO Bus has secured funding from the University of Hertfordshire and the Department for Transport to purchase 27 electric buses over the next 3 years under the ZEBRA programme (Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas). The long-term plan is to convert all vehicles to zero emissions; however, this process will be less incremental than the energy decarbonisation plan due to the capital requirements as well as depot size and energy supply constraints.

OTHER VEHICLES

The university owns 5 vans that support the portering and logistics operations. These are currently ICE vehicles with diesel engines. Emissions from these operations can be seen in the table below, and in 2023-24, the CO2e emissions were 45% lower than during the baseline period, largely due to:

- Reducing the fleet from 7 to 5 vehicles
- A change in delivery model (less office moves and movement of equipment around site)
- Grouping of tasks
- Introduction of contractors to support with these services
- Decline in postal services from 2 deliveries / collections a day to 1

Portering and postage	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
tCO2e	9.4	-	-	5.92	4.48	5.15
Change vs previous year					- 24%	15%
change against baseline	-			-37%	- 52%	- 45%

Looking ahead, we will continue to explore ways to reduce the emissions from our estate vehicles, including operational efficiencies and trialling cargo bikes.

F-GAS

Objective: Reduce the impact of university operations and estate on climate change.

While emissions from F-Gas on campus are not included in the overall Scope 1 & 2 carbon reporting as this is not requested by HESA for the EMR (Estates Management Reporting) - the framework that we currently align our reporting with, we do measure and track our emissions from F-Gas and report on these separately.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23*	2023-24**
tCO2e	343.64	112.16	116.77	234.75	56.18	120
change against baseline	-	-67%	-66%	-32%	-	-65%

* NB. the 2022/23 figure is based on reactive works only for split units and chillers. Due to a change in contractors, PPM only started in March 2023, meaning that the 22-23 value is not representative.

** NB. Only from DBS, no data from Blue Flag

While the 2023-24 data is incomplete, emissions from F-Gas has been declining steadily thanks to effective maintenance and repairs, and a transition away from the most harmful F-Gases.

LOOKING AHEAD

In the coming months, a plant condition survey will be carried out on all assets, and a replacement programme developed accordingly. Split units and chillers that are beyond their economic life will be removed where possible or replaced with units with lower (Global Warming Potential (GWP) gases where the units are still needed. Shorter cycles in the planned preventative maintenance programme (PPM) will further help reduce emissions from leaks. When F-Gas becomes incorporated into standardised carbon reporting, we will include this in our Scope 1 & 2 calculations.

SCOPE 3

PROCUREMENT

Our Procurement emissions fall under the Scope 3 category as while they are outside our direct control, they arise as a result of our activities and operations. Procurement emissions are reported under 2 categories:

Goods and Services includes:

- Business services
- Paper products
- Manufactured chemicals
- Fuels and gases
- Food and catering (we also measure the carbon footprint of food sold based on ingredients rather than spend, but this is reported separately – see section below)
- Medical and precision instruments
- Other procurement
- Unclassified

Capital Goods includes:

- Information and communication technologies
- Construction

As per the sector standard, procurement emissions are calculated by the Southern Universities' Procurement Consortium (SUPC) using a spend-based rather than product / service-based methodology in each sub-category, using GHG Protocol conversion factors.

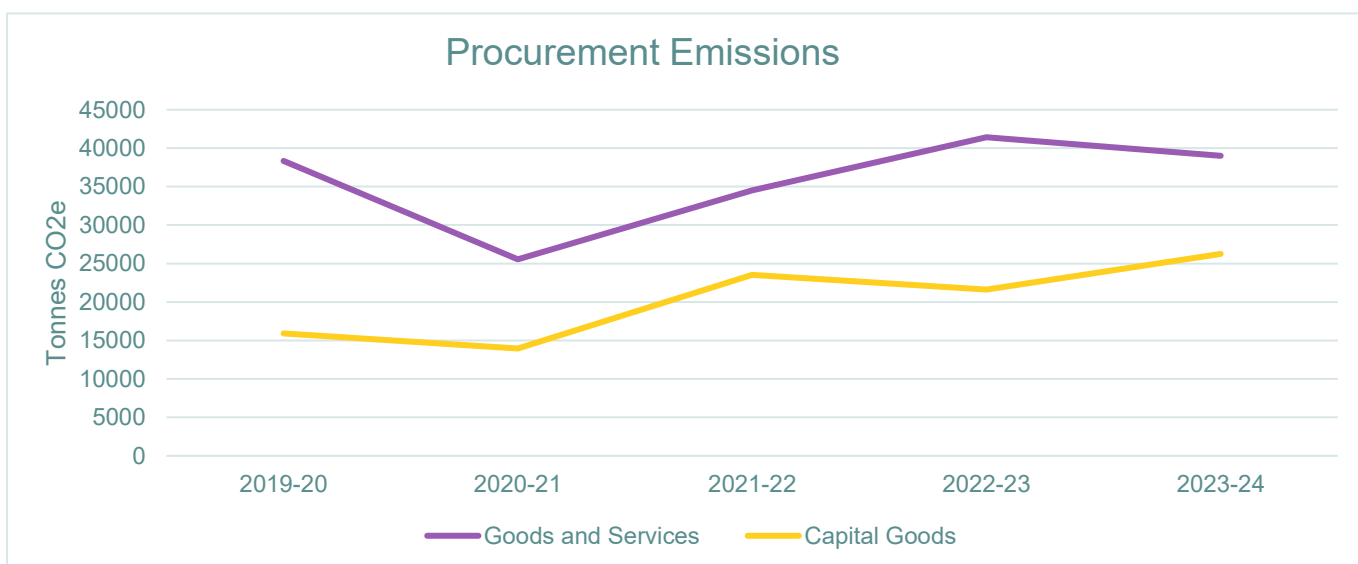
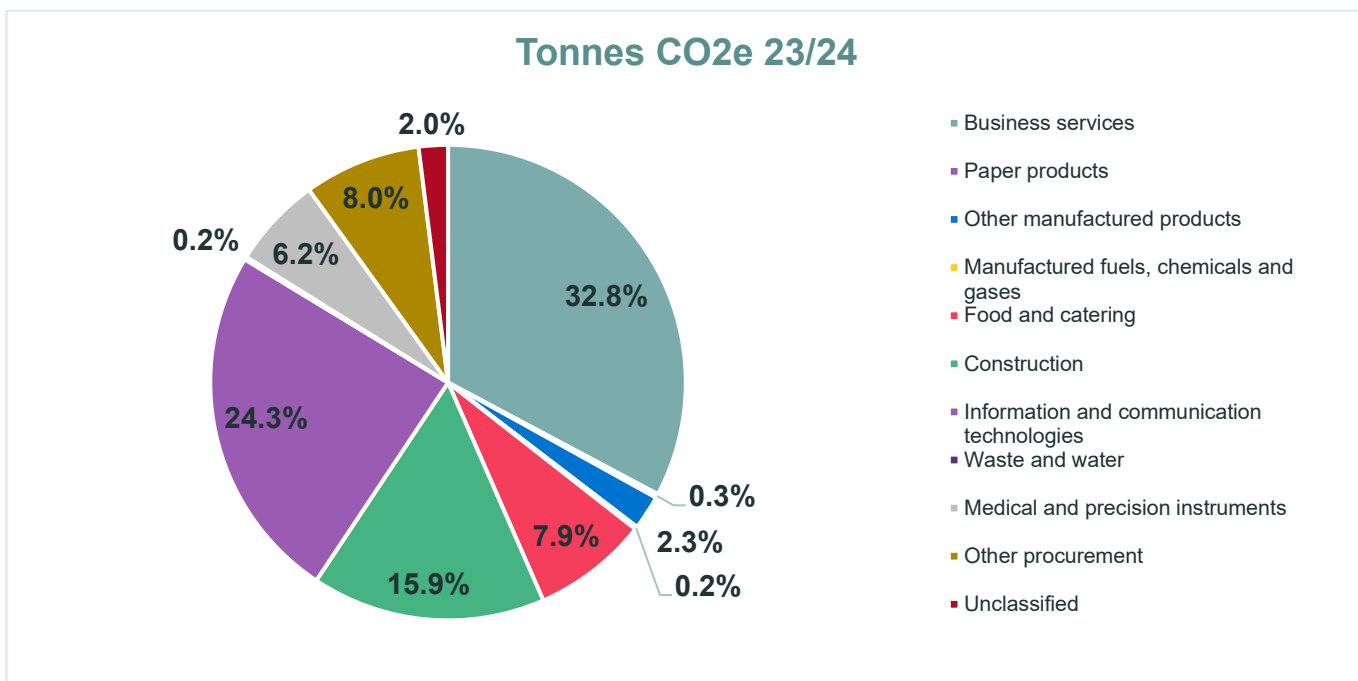
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Goods and Services	not available	38,333	25,547	34,519	41,419	39,003
Change against 19/20			-33%	-10%	8%	2%
Capital goods	not available	15,914	13,955	23,534	21,601	26,250
Change against 19/20			-12%	48%	36%	65%
Total	60,000*	54,247	39,502	58,053	63,020	65,253
Change against 18/19		-10%	-34%	-3%	5%	9%

tCO2e per FTE		2.58	1.73	2.27	2.11	2.16
Change against 19/20		-14%	-42%	-24%	-29%	-28%

*Estimate based on 2019-20 taking into account the university closure in the latter part of the 19-20 academic year due to Covid.

While emissions from procurement for 23-24 are up 9% on the baseline figure of 60,000 tonnes of CO²e, when considering the growth in staff and student numbers over the last 5 years, our procurement emissions per FTE have fallen by a notable **28%**.

The breakdown of the total Procurement emissions for each sub-category can be seen below.



This has been helped by the publication of a new Sustainable Procurement Policy that sets out guidance on making sustainable purchasing decisions, as well as a new structure in Procurement enabling category managers to better manage and support procurement in specific areas.

Emissions from food	2022-23	2034-24
CO ² e	144.70	185.88
Vs previous year		28%
Kg per FTE	4.85	6.17
Vs previous year		27%

LOOKING AHEAD

Going forward, we will undertake a comprehensive supplier audit, identifying the top 10 “emitters” in each category, and requesting environment and climate commitments from suppliers. This will then help inform the setting of SMART targets and further action relating to procurement scope 3 emissions.

SCOPE 3 UTILITIES

Our Scope 3 utility emissions² are directly related to the consumption of water and electricity. While increased electricity consumption and a slightly higher T&D conversion factor have resulted in a small increase in emissions from electricity transmission and distribution, the emissions from water supply and wastewater treatment has fallen to 70 tonnes of CO²e.

As both of these should decline going forward as we continue to work towards our carbon and water targets.

Tonnes of CO ₂ e from	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Electricity	603.93	485.16	455.43	446.21	443.32	450.53
Water	363.832	335.59	77.66	111.11	77.63	70.43

FOOD AND CATERING

In January 2023, our catering contractor Aramark launched its Carbon Footprint initiative in collaboration with Nutritics which calculates and displays a score for all the meals served in our outlets³. This not only allows us to accurately measure the emissions from our catering service, but it also helps encourage users to consider the environmental impact of their food choices, nudging them towards more sustainable menus.

Carbon emissions from food started being recorded in January 2023. 23-24 represents the first full year of carbon data from food. While the 22-23 figure is estimated as data was unavailable for Aug – Dec 22, we are now building a more complete picture of the environmental impact of food sold on campus. Our plans to reduce emissions from food will be detailed in the healthy and sustainable food policy which will be published in 2025.



² Water supply & wastewater treatment, and electricity transmissions and distribution

³ Product-based carbon emissions from the food sold through tills in the canteens, excluding Premier Shops, Subway, and hospitality. The proportion of food sold through the tills is around 49% of total food sales on campus, so the data applies to around 50% of our catering service.

STAFF AND STUDENT COMMUTING

As staff and student commuting contributes significantly to our Scope 3 emissions, capturing data and developing a travel plan has been a priority for the Estates team in 2023-24. In early 2024, the University of Hertfordshire invited its staff and students to take part in a Travel Survey to help better understand commuting behaviours and inform the Travel Plan. The results revealed that:

- 76% of employees are driving alone to work
- 30% of staff are commuting in 3 days a week
- The average commute distance amongst the workforce is 15.5 miles (one-way)
- While 30% of staff live within a reasonable distance for an active commute, only 7% of employees travel in this manner
- The total emissions for staff commuting are estimated at **1,344.7** tonnes of CO₂e
- Main barriers to using other modes of transport are finance- and time-related.

As the response rate for students was not sufficient for the quantitative data to be statistically representative, all relevant qualitative data has been considered and incorporated in the plan, due for publication in August 2024.

While we already run a number of initiatives to help reduce emissions from commuting such as:

- Active Ride – free bike hire
- Discounted bus fares
- Dozens of UNO Bus routes
- Bike training and route guides
- Secure bike storage and shower facilities

The travel survey results will help set targets based on current data and propose measures accordingly. Progress and implementation will then be managed by the travel working group.

BUSINESS TRAVEL

We currently report on emissions arising from business travel through HESA's EMR framework. In 2021 we started collecting product-based business travel data from our partners Diversity Travel (air and train) and Enterprise (car hire). In 2022-23 we included emissions from miles travelled for business purposes in own cars. Figures for 2018 – 2021 are estimated based on FTE numbers and travel frequency before and during Covid. As can be seen below, emissions from business travel have been steadily increasing as we emerged from the pandemic (2021-22).

	2018-19*	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Tonnes CO ₂ e	1,910	887.10	500	887.10	1,240.24	1,978.47
Vs previous year		-54%	-44%	+77%	+40%	+60%
Change against baseline		-54%	-74%	-54%	-35%	+4%

* Estimated

Looking ahead, we will be taking steps to both improve the data collection and reduce the emissions derived from business travel. We are planning to develop a new sustainable business travel policy in 2025 which will set out targets and objectives to address the environmental impact of business travel.

SCOPE 3 – OVERALL

The table below shows our Scope 3 progress against our 2018/19 baseline.

Tonnes CO ² e	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Procurement	60,000.00*	54,247.00	39,502.00	58,053.00	63,020.00	65,253
Waste	25.35	16.64	14.68	16.00	18.74	10.33
Electricity T&D	603.93	485.16	455.43	446.21	443.32	450.53
Water supply and treatment	363.83	335.59	77.66	111.11	77.63	70.43
Business travel	1,910.00	1,910.00	887.10	887.10	1,240.24	1,978.47
Commuting	-	-	-	-	-	1,344.70
Total	62,903.11	56,994.39	40,936.87	59,513.42	64,799.92	69,107.46
Per FTE (tCO ² e)	3.13	2.71	1.79	2.33	2.17	2.29

* 2018/19 figures estimated based on 2019-20

While the total figure shows an absolute increase on the 2018/19 values, when considering the growth in staff and student numbers, this actually represents a 27% decrease in emissions per FTE. It is also worth noting that due to a previous error in the government conversion factors for waste, these were revised down significantly, leading to a large decrease in emissions from waste despite an increase in total waste. Also noteworthy is the fact that both the procurement and business travel figures for 2018/19 have been estimated, so while important to compare against a baseline, going forward we will also be reporting on progress against previous actual data, and focus on the predicted trajectory for each category.

CLIMATE CHANGE - CONCLUSION

As can be seen from the table below, we are making good progress against our Scope 1, 2 and 3 targets, particularly when the increase in staff and student numbers is considered. While 2023-24 saw a slight increase in total scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions of 2%, we are making significant progress in reducing the emissions directly within our control, as demonstrated by the 32% reduction per FTE since 2018/19 (scope 1 and 2).

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Scope 1 & 2 - tCO²e	17,044.80	13,487.66	12,044.50	13,591.05	12,389.23	12,745.94
Scope 3 - tCO²e	62,903.11	56,994.39	40,936.87	59,513.42	64,799.92	69,107.46
Total	79,947.91	70,482.05	52,981.36	73,104.47	77,189.16	81,853.40
Change against baseline		-12%	-34%	-9%	-3%	2%
FTE - tCO²e	3.98	3.35	2.32	2.86	2.59	2.72
Change against baselines FTE		-16%	-42%	-28%	-35%	-32%

Looking ahead, we will continue to focus on reducing the emissions that we have direct control over and ensure that we meet our Scope 1 and 2 targets. We will also continue to improve our Scope 3 accounting methodologies and data collection practices so that meaningful SMART targets can be set, and action plans developed to reduce our Scope 3 emissions in line with internal, sector, and national commitments.

WASTE & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



The University's Waste and Resource Management Strategy is based on the principles of waste hierarchy which sets out the order in which waste management measures should be prioritised based on environmental impact. Our Environmental policy statement lists the following objectives related to waste:

- *Reducing University waste production and promoting resource efficiency through its Waste and Resource Management Strategy to 2023.*



OUR PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

	Waste Output (tonnes)	Waste per head (kg)	Waste to landfill (t)	Waste to landfill %	Waste Recycled %*	Waste to Energy %	CO2e (t) from waste
2018 - 19	895.62	44.60	13.55	1.51 %	59 %	39 %	25.35
2019 - 20	621.65	29.55	9.86	1.59 %	72 %	27 %	16.64
2020 - 21	564	24.7	7.34	1.30 %	50 %	49 %	14.68
2021 - 22	622.44	24.34	8.7	1.4 %	65 %	34 %	16.0
2022 - 23	726.44	24.36	9.9	1.37%	61 %	37.8%	18.74
2023 - 24	819.94	27.20	9.3	1.13%	57%	41.79%	10.33

* total recycling rate includes source segregated recycling, Mixed Recycling Facility (MRF) recovery, composting and anaerobic digestion.

Despite an increase in total waste output for 2023-24 compared to the previous period, 819.94 tonnes still represents a 8% decrease from pre-pandemic levels (2018-19), which is notable given that our staff and student FTE numbers have almost doubled in that period reflecting a waste per head improvement of 39%. Levels of waste to landfill and recycling rates have also improved on the baseline level. The improvement in waste figures is a result of awareness campaigns encouraging students to bring reusable bottles and hot drink cups, more items being relocated and reused within the university, fewer paper products being used, and improved signage.

In 2023 we also collaborated with Aramark on their Wipe Out Waste campaign, which promotes the reuse of vegetable peelings and other food scraps, with the aim of reducing food waste on campus and at home. In 2023-24, 59.76 tonnes of food waste was generated on campus, which represents a 25% reduction on the previous year. While this is an encouraging number, this figure represents waste collected from the dedicated food waste

stream, and we are conscious that some food waste is being disposed of as general waste. We will track progress against over coming years and as Aramark work towards their pledge of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030.

LOOKING AHEAD

We are exploring options to embed internal systems that will help make it easier to rehome and re-purpose unwanted furniture and other office items within the university. We will also be carrying out a comprehensive waste audit to help inform interventions to continue to improve our waste performance.

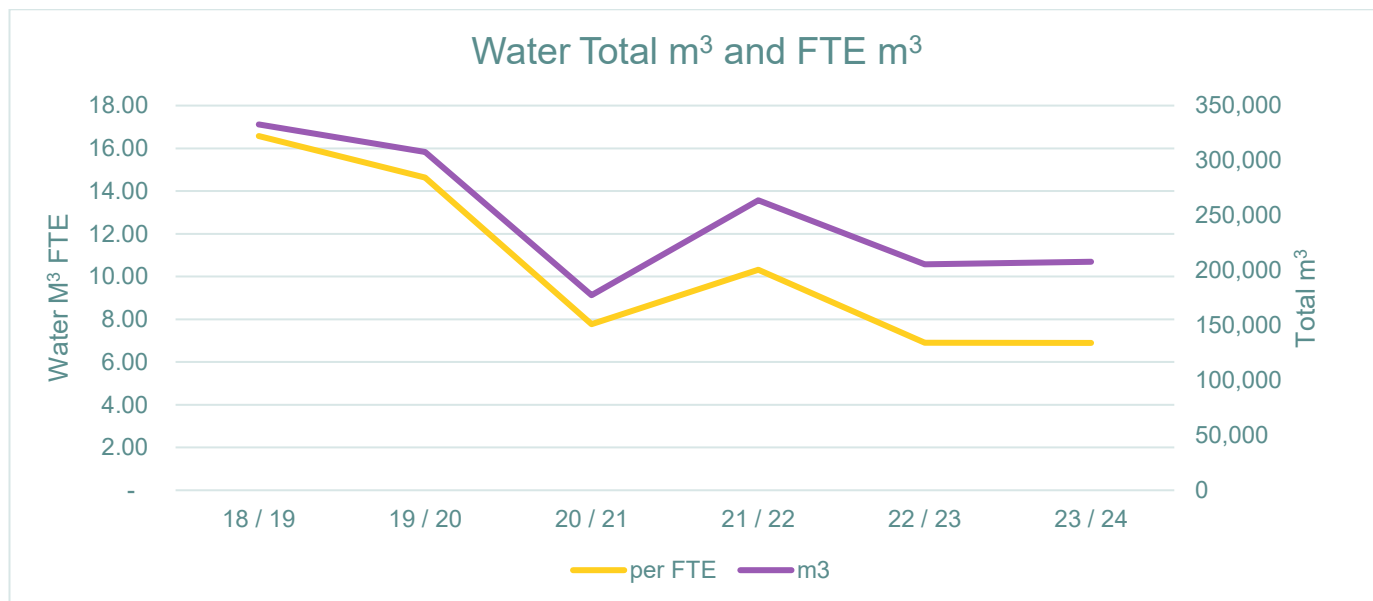
WATER



Objective: Reduce the impact of water usage on the environment

We have continued to reduce both our absolute and per FTE water consumption on campus. While hybrid working can be attributed to some of this improvement, much of it is down to extensive leak detection and rectification works completed at the College Lane Campus.

Water	18 / 19	19 / 20	20 / 21	21 / 22	22 / 23	23 / 24
m3	332,847	307,664	177,478	263,909	205,667	207,846
per FTE	16.57	14.63	7.78	10.32	6.90	6.90
change on baseline 18/19		-8%	-47%	-21%	-41%	58%



BIODIVERSITY



With three campuses spanning 97 hectares, the university has a key role in protecting and enhancing biodiversity. Biodiversity is a core component of our Sustainability agenda and Estates Vision. Our Biodiversity objectives continue to be managed through the Biodiversity Action Plan published in 2021, sets the following commitment relating to biodiversity:

- *To promote biodiversity by conserving, protecting, and enhancing existing wildlife habitats and creating new ones*

While we don't yet have any SMART targets associated with this impact area, in 2023-24 we undertook a number of activities to help protect and enhance Biodiversity on campus, including:

- Carrying out our annual hedgehog surveys (yes, we have hedgehogs on campus!)
- Developing a new campus Biodiversity Walk
- Delivering ecology and grounds training
- Running engagement activities such as litter picks, bird watches, butterfly counts, and conservation days and nature photo competitions
- **Big Hog-Friendly Litter Picking** national champions (university category).

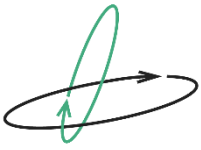


LOOKING AHEAD

In 2024-25 we are planning to undertake a Biodiversity Baseline Assessment across our three campuses. This will not only help establish the current state of biodiversity on our Estate but will also make setting targets and measuring progress easier and more meaningful.

We will also review our tree management plan to ensure that we can protect as much of our green asset base as possible.

MANAGING OUR RISKS AND COMPLIANCE OBLIGATIONS



Managing our environmental risks and obligations is a key priority at the University of Hertfordshire. We have a robust Environmental Management System (EMS) which continues to be governed, managed, and reported on through our working and steering groups, and according to our terms of reference. As per our Environmental Policy statement, we aim to:

- Preventing Pollution
- Complying with environmental legislation
- Striving for continual improvement
- Reducing its impact on the climate by becoming Net Zero by 2050
- Protecting and enhancing Biodiversity
- Reducing the impact of its waste and resource utilisation
- Building a sustainable community through education, skills development, student experience, research, enterprise, and partnerships.

While our management system provides the strong foundations upon which to deliver our environmental commitments, it is our demonstration of continual improvement that enables us to be Eco Campus Platinum certified. Our risks, obligations, and commitments, are managed through our EMS, enabling us to mitigate our impact on the environment as much as possible. In 2023-24, we measured our environmental impact against 23 KPIs associated with 9 environmental objectives. Of these, 9 were completed by July 2023, with 13 remaining ongoing into 2024-25.

In July 2024, we were externally audited by Interface as part of the ISO:14001 cycle: recertification audit.

The audit observed that the University “operates a robust, mature and effective Environmental Management System (EMS), which is well integrated into the broader sustainability strategy. There were no findings raised and previous Opportunities for Improvement had been actioned and were closed”.

There were various positives noted, including:

- There is a clear top management commitment and involvement with sustainability strategy.
- There is a good connection between strategic oversight and operational control and improvement.
- It was observed that there is generally good progress against sustainability objectives.
- The internal audit approach is robust and there can be a high level of confidence that operational controls are effectively monitored.
- Nonconformances are addressed promptly and managed effectively.
- There was a consistently high level of awareness of compliance obligations demonstrated, with robust controls and processes being routinely followed.
- A positive commitment to enhancing biodiversity was observed, exemplified at Bayfordbury but shared across the other campuses too.
- It was notable that the level of cooperation between University staff, contractors and sub contractors was very high, with a shared commitment to pursuing sustainability goals demonstrated.
- It was observed that there is enthusiastic commitment to engage students and staff in sustainability initiatives, both voluntarily and through teaching and learning.
- There is a substantial commitment of financial resources to sustainability initiatives (particularly Net Zero), e.g. Capex Budget and investment in SPECTRA building.

There were no non-conformances or Opportunities for Improvement (OFIs) raised. Overall, the management system was found to meet the requirements, and we were recommended recertification to ISO14001:2015. Our EMS has also been awarded EcoCampus Platinum status:



CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: BS EN ISO 14001:2015

This is to certify that:

University of Hertfordshire Higher Education Corporation

Holds Multi-Site Certificate No: **E8066**

and operates an Environmental Management System which complies with the requirements of ISO 14001:2015 for the following scope:

The Provision of Higher Education and Academic Services at the College Lane, Bayfordbury, and De Havilland campuses

Sites and activities are listed on the additional page(s)

For and on behalf of Interface NRM Ltd:

Tim Barker

Director, Interface NRM Ltd.

First Issued: **10/12/2012**
Latest Issue: **26/07/2024**
Expiry Date: **14/09/2027**



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Priorsley, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 9PL, UK. 01952 288325

www.interface-nrm.co.uk



Certificate of Registration EcoCampus National Award Scheme

This is to certify that

University of Hertfordshire

Has successfully achieved the
Platinum Award

On: **26th July 2024**

Expires: **14th September 2025**

Signed by:

Dr Peter Redfern



EcoCampus Platinum Stage auditing is carried out by a UKAS accredited assessment, verification and certification body.



BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY



With a community of over 30,000 staff and students, we have a significant opportunity to drive positive change both at Herts and beyond. In 2023-24, a number of initiatives were led by a dedicated engagement coordinator.

Objective: Increase awareness among Staff and Students on the University approach to Environmental Sustainability.

We have set new targets to increase engagement year on year going forward, and have this year collected our baseline data against which we will measure progress. As the programme develops, we may also add additional metrics to make our engagement offering more relevant and meaningful.

KPI	Number
Total engagement with staff through events, activities, and campaigns	542
Total engagement with students through events, activities, and campaigns	2743
Number of events delivered throughout the academic year	71
Number of collaboration events (internal and external partners)	108
Number of staff in the Sustainability Network	74
Number of Sustainability Advocates	106
Advocate Hours Volunteered	480
Number of social media engagements (Instagram)	1884

In 2022-23 we ran a number of activities and initiatives to engage our community:

UH SUSTAINABILITY ADVOCATES

In 2022 we launched the Sustainability Advocates programme, a volunteering scheme for students to learn new skills, meet like-minded people, earn Go Herts points, and make a difference to our environment. Activities available through the programme include:

Enrichment:

- Environmental audit training
- Wildlife survey training
- Allotment sessions
- Sustainability workshop/talk

Empowerment:

- Green Teams audits
- Recycling audits
- Energy audits

- Wildlife surveys
- Litter picks
- Community outreach
- Assisting with awareness stalls

In 2023-24, 110 students signed up to be Sustainability Advocates. 106 of these volunteered at least 1 hour and in total the Sustainability Advocates completed over 1,465 hours of volunteering between them. We also continued to collaborate with Green Herts, a Student Union society set up in 2022 by some of our volunteers.



STAFF NETWORK

In 2022 we re-launched our Sustainability Staff Network to provide an opportunity for like-minded staff to unite around a shared passion for environmental sustainability. The Network aims to:

- Provide a forum for staff to share and discuss ideas and advice on environmental issues.
- Increase awareness of environment and sustainability at UH and beyond.

By Aug 2023, the network had 68 members of staff, taking part in monthly activities ranging from workshops to informal get-togethers.

GO GREEN WEEK

In March 2024, the engagement team ran a Go Green week – a week of different activities and events to foster environmental behaviour change, particularly among students who are not already engaged with sustainability. The campaign was a great success, and across the week, 19 teams organised 22 events and engaged 380 people. The Instagram account also received 51 new followers, and 7 new Sustainability Advocates were recruited.



GREEN TEAMS CHALLENGE – STAFF ENGAGEMENT

In 2023 we launched a new, in-house, competition where Herts staff can earn points for their School or SBU by taking part in sustainable activities and initiatives throughout the year or organising their own. This replaced the Green Impact programme that was run the year before. The challenge was a great success, with 12 SBUs and Schools actively taking part and organising over 100 green events and initiatives between them, including litter picks, veggie lunches, pre-loved giveaway days, and sustainable craft sessions. For 2023-24 the School of Creative Arts won the competition and was awarded with a trophy at the Staff Summer Social in July. The team also presented an award to an individual staff member for their Outstanding Contribution towards the challenge.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

On top of the above-mentioned programmes and initiatives, the engagement team also ran several campaigns throughout the year to engage staff and students, particularly those not already engaged through other means. These activities included to name a few:

- Litter picks
- Sustainable Christmas stall
- Plant-based taster sessions
- Sustainability games
- Movie nights
- Biodiversity walks
- Conservation sessions
- Fungi walks
- Photo competitions

We also collaborated with several schools, departments, and societies on sustainability projects, and were nominated in the SU x UH staff collaboration category at the SU Awards for the support we provided their teams and students.

FESTIVAL OF IDEAS

In May 2024, the university held its first Festival of ideas, a 2-day showcase of innovation and creativity where thousands of businesses, local residents and school children had the opportunity to immerse themselves in talks, simulations, and dozens of engaging activities. As part of this event, the Sustainability Hub offered a number of opportunities for delegates to learn about sustainability at Herts and beyond through games, talks, simulations, nature walks, and craft activities.



TEACHING, LEARNING AND SKILLS FOR LIFE



SUSTAINABLE CURRICULUM

The UH Graduate Attributes which include being “sustainability driven” are embedded within our programmes of study both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. The Attributes are mapped within all programmes, with opportunities to identify which specific Attributes are developed within each module via the virtual learning environment. Herts continues to offer a number of courses in environmental sustainability, including undergraduate, postgraduate and short courses in subject areas such as Transport, Planning, Environmental Management and Ecology; Outdoor Education; MBA with Sustainability.

RESEARCH, ENTERPRISE AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Our Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Exchange Pathway helps drive sustainability through engagement with external partners such as councils, businesses and regional partnerships, and in 2023-24, the Business Enterprise and Innovation (BEI) team delivered against the following commitments:

- Regular meetings of the Sustainability Group
- Introduction to Sustainability at Herts and training opportunities are included in BEI’s induction pack.
- Sustainability training to be discussed during appraisals
- Environmental awareness training course available on IHASCO
- Sustainability-focused and trackers to be incorporated into the various departmental activities as appropriate.
- Sustainability to be included on individual team meeting agenda’s

Some of the activities delivered during this period include:

Curriculum and student experience:

- The new UH Environment and Sustainability strategy was shared (Nov 2023) with over 1000 Business School students, being asked how they can get involved and support this journey.
- May 2024 Festival of Ideas – sustainability Hub

Enterprise, research and global engagement:

- Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) Nov 2023 Sustainability included in themes explored as part of the 12-month Incubator Programme.
- Sustainability Conference July 2023
- Involved in Herts IQ and Clean Growth Network – update August 2023
- Herts Growth Hub – Better Business for All Webinar Nov 2023 ‘telling your business sustainability story’
- Festival of Ideas May 2024 – Research ‘air we breathe’ and biodetection
- Green Gorilla Short Course offered to SME audience
- SHAKE climate change acceleration programme continues to support enterprises and entrepreneurs with climate change-focused innovation
- UH research and expertise showcased at Groundswell Regenerative Agriculture Festival, June 2024

Read more about our climate research and the important work they are doing here: [Climate change and Sustainability Research](#)

CONCLUSION

While 2023-24 saw progress in many areas relating to our environmental sustainability aims, particularly carbon from energy and engagement, it was also a period of putting in place measures and collecting data enabling us to meet our commitments and set new targets. As identified in the ISO14001 audit, our frameworks and governance structures provide a good connection between strategic oversight and operational control and improvement, and we are making good progress against sustainability objectives. Looking ahead, we will also continue to work closely with staff, students and the wider community to inspire a culture around sustainability, where everyone feels empowered to contribute to the lived experience of our sustainability agenda.


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